RULERS OF INDIA

EDITED BY

SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

PLATE I

ASOKA'S PILLAR AT LAURIYA-NANDANGARH

Frontispiece]

ASOKA

THE BUDDHIST EMPEROR OF INDIA

BY

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

ALTHOUGH the plan of the book is maintained unchanged, and Chapters VI and VII, containing the legends, have been reprinted without material emendation, this edition is substantially a new work

The versions of the inscriptions, its most important part, have been repeatedly compared word by word with the texts and revised throughout, after careful consideration of all criticisms accessible to me In this task I have been aided greatly by many valuable communications received from Mr F W Thomas, Librarian of the India Office It is a pleasure to me to be now able to agree with M Senart in the view expressed by him in 1886, and adopted by Mr Thomas, that Minor Rock Edict I is the earliest document in the collection, and that the mysterious figures at the end of it are not a date Unfortunately, agreement with those two eminent scholars involves disagreement with others The recent discovery of the Sârnâth pillar not only adds a new edict to those previously known, but also clears up the interpretation of the Sânchî and Kausâmbî edicts, which were misunderstood when the first edition of this book was published A bibliographical note and map have been inserted

The difference of opinion alluded to concerning the interpretation of Minor Rock Edict I governs the

treatment of the whole history of Asoka, which is discussed in this volume on the basis that he became a Buddhist early in his reign, and that all the edicts were issued by him as the sovereign Head of the Buddhist Church

The description of the Maurya empire and administration in Chapter II has been revised with special regard to the discovery and partial publication by Mr R. Shamasastry of the ancient treatise on the Art of Government, ascribed to Chânakya or Kautilya, the minister of Chandragupta Maurya

The account of the monuments in Chapter III has been corrected in various details, brought up to date, and amplified

The time for declaring the interpretation of every phrase in the inscriptions of Asoka to be definitely settled has not yet come, but this little volume, while not professing to solve all doubts, aims at placing before its readers the results of the latest researches so far as they are known to and understood by the author, and certainly marks a great advance in the correct interpretation of the documents, as compared with its predecessor Perhaps it may be permissible to add that it is still the only work in any language in which all the inscriptions can be found together, except that Dr Coomaraswamy has issued from the Essex House Press a limited *édition de luxe* of my versions, nearly identical with those now offered.

V. A S

Feb 12, 1909

EXTRACT FROM PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

A VOLUME on Asoka Maurya by Professor Rhys Davids was intended to be the first of the 'Rulers of India' series, but unfortunately circumstances prevented the fulfilment of that intention, and the series was closed leaving vacant the niche destined for the great Buddhist emperor With the approval of Professor Rhys Davids I have undertaken the preparation of a supplementary volume giving in a popular form the substance of what is known concerning the Maurya empire The sources of our knowledge of ancient Indian history are so meagre that it is impossible to treat the subject of this volume in a manner similar to that in which the biographies of Akbar, Albuquerque, and other Indian worthies have been treated All minute biographical details are lacking, and a distinct picture of the man Asoka cannot be painted Nevertheless, enough is known to render the subject interesting, and if my book should fail to interest readers, the fault will lie with the author rather than with the subject.

The chapter entitled 'The History of Asoka' will be found to differ widely from all other publications, such as Cunningham's *Bhilsa Topes*, which treat of that topic I have tried to follow the example of the best modern historians, and to keep the legends

separate from what seems to me to be authentic history. Among the legends I have placed the stories of the conversion of Ceylon and of the deliberations of the so-called Third Council. All the forms of those stories which have reached us are crowded with absurdities and contradictions from which legitimate criticism cannot extract trustworthy history.

In dealing with the vexed question of transliteration I have shunned the pedantic atrocities of international systems, which do not shrink from presenting Krishna in the guise of Kṛsna, Champâ as *K*ampâ, and so on. The consonants in the Indian words and names in this book are to be pronounced as in English, and the vowels usually as in Italian. The short unaccented *a* has an indistinct sound as in the word 'woman.' Long vowels are marked when necessary; other diacritical marks have not been used in the text.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF ASOKA

WHEN Alexander, invincible before all enemies save death, passed away at Babylon in June, B C 323, and his generals assembled in council to divide the empire which no arm but his could control, they were compelled perforce to decide that the distant Indian provinces should remain in the hands of the officers and princes to whom they had been entrusted by the king Two years later when an amended partition was effected at Triparadeisos in Syria, Sibyrtios was confirmed as governor of Arachosia (Kandahâr) and Gedrosia (Makrân), the provinces of Aria (Herat) and Drangiana (Sistân) being assigned to Stasander the Cyprian, while Bactriana and Sogdiana to the north of the Hindû Kush were bestowed on Stasanor of Soli, another Cyprian Oxyartes, father of Alexander's consort, Roxana, obtained the satrapy of the Paropanisadai, or Kâbul territory, the neighbouring Indian districts to the west of the Indus being placed in charge of Peithon, son of Agênor, whom Alexander had appointed ruler of Sind below the confluence of the rivers Probably Peithon was not in a position to hold Sind after his master's death Antipater, who arranged

the partition, admitting that he possessed no force adequate to remove the Râjâs to the east of the Indus, was obliged to recognize Omphis or Âmbhi, king of Taxila, and Pôros, Alexander's honoured opponent, as lords of the Panjâb, subject to a merely nominal dependence on the Macedonian power [1] Philippos, whom Alexander had made satrap of that province, was murdered by his mercenary troops early in B.C 324, and Alexander, who heard the news in Karmania, was unable to do more than appoint an officer named Eudêmos to act as the colleague of King Âmbhi Eudêmos managed to hold his ground for some time, but in or about B C 317 treacherously slew his Indian colleague, seized a hundred and twenty elephants, and with them and a considerable body of troops, marched off to help Eumenes in his struggle with Antipater [2]. The departure of Eudêmos marks the final collapse of the Macedonian attempt to establish a Greek empire in India

But several years before that event a new Indian

[1] 'For it was impossible to remove (μετακινῆσαι) these kings without royal troops under the command of some distinguished general' (Diodorus Sic xviii 39)

[2] The partition of Triparadeisos is detailed in Diodorus Siculus, xviii 39 His statement that the country along the Indus was assigned to Pôros, and that along the Hydaspes to Taxiles (*scil* Âmbhi) cannot be correct, and the names of the kings seem to have been transposed

The departure of Eudêmos is related, ibid xix 14 He is said to have seized the elephants after the death of Alexander, 'having treacherously slain Pôros the king' But there is a various reading πρῶτον ('first') for Πῶρον ('Pôros')

power had arisen which could not brook the presence of foreign garrisons, and probably had destroyed most of them prior to the withdrawal of Eudêmos The death of Alexander in June, B C 323, must have been known in India early in the autumn, and it is reasonable to suppose that risings of the natives occurred as soon as the season for campaigning opened in October The leader of the movement for the liberation of his country which then began was a young man named Chandragupta Maurya, who seems to have been an illegitimate scion of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha, or South Bihâr, then the premier state in the interior With the help of an astute Brahman counsellor named Chânakya, who became his minister, Chandragupta dethroned and slew the Nanda king, exterminating his family He then ascended the vacant throne at Pâtaliputra the capital, the modern Patna, and for twenty-four years ruled the realm with an iron hand If Justin may be believed, the usurper turned into slavery the semblance of liberty which he had won for the Indians by his expulsion of the Macedonians, and oppressed the people with a cruel tyranny Employing the fierce and more than half-foreign clans of the north-western frontier to execute his ambitious plans, he quickly extended his sway over the whole of Northern India, probably as far as the Narbadâ Whether he first made himself master of Magadha and thence advanced northwards against the Macedonian garrisons, or first headed the risings in the Panjâb, and then with the forces collected there swooped down upon the Gangetic Kingdom,

does not clearly appear[1] There is, however, no doubt about the result of his action. Chandragupta became the first emperor of India and ruled the land from sea to sea.

Seleukos, surnamed Nikator, or the Conqueror, by reason of his many victories, had established himself as Satrap of Babylon after the partition of Triparadeisos in B C. 321, but six years later was driven out by his rival Antigonos and compelled to flee to Egypt. After three years' exile he recovered Babylon in B. C. 312, and devoted himself to the consolidation and extension of his power He attacked and subjugated the Bactrians, and in B C 306 assumed the royal title. He is known to historians as King of Syria, although that province formed only a small part of his wide dominions, which included all western Asia

About the same time (B. C 305) he crossed the Indus, and directed his victorious arms against India in the hope of regaining the provinces which had been held

[1] 'Auctor libertatis Sandrocottus fuerat sed titulum libertatis post victoriam in servitutem verterat Siquidem occupato regno, populum, quem ab externa dominatione vindicaverat, ipse servitio premebat Fuit hic quidem humili genere natus contractis latronibus, Indos ad novitatem regni sollicitavit Molienti deinde bellum adversus praefectos Alexandri , duxque belli et praeliator insignis fuit. Sic acquisito regno, Sandrocottus ea tempestate, qua Seleucus futurae magnitudinis fundamenta iaciebat, Indiam possidebat cum quo facta pactione Seleucus' The miracles are omitted from the quotation The word *deinde* seems to indicate that the war with Alexander's officers followed the usurpation (Justin. xv 4)

by his late master for a brief space, and of surpassing his achievement by subduing the central kingdoms. But the vast hosts of teeming India led by Chandragupta were more than a match for the power of the Macedonian, who was compelled to withdraw from the country and renounce his ambition to eclipse the glory of Alexander. No record of the conflict has survived, and we are ignorant of the place of battle and everything save the result. Terms of peace, including a matrimonial alliance between the two royal houses, were arranged, and the Indian monarch obtained from his opponent the cession of four satrapies, Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia, and the Paropanisadai, giving in exchange the comparatively small recompense of five hundred elephants. This memorable treaty extended Chandragupta's frontier to the Hindû Kush mountains, and brought under his sway nearly the whole of the present Kingdom of Afghanistan, besides Balûchistan and Makrân.[1]

A German writer has evolved from his inner consciousness a theory that Chandragupta recognized the suzerainty of Seleukos, but the plain facts are that the Syrian monarch failed and was obliged to surrender four valuable provinces for very inadequate consideration. Five hundred elephants at a high

[1] The current assertion that the Syrian King 'gave his daughter in marriage' to Chandragupta is not warranted by the evidence, which testifies merely to a 'matrimonial alliance' (κῆδος, ἐπιγαμία). The authorities for the extent of the cession of territory by Seleukos are textually quoted and discussed in *Early History of India*, 2nd ed., App. G.

valuation would not be worth more than about two millions of rupees, say £125,000 sterling Seleukos never attempted to assert any superiority over his successful Indian rival, but, on the contrary, having failed in attack, made friends with the power which had proved to be too strong for him, and treated Chandragupta as an equal.

In pursuance of this policy, soon after his defeat, in or about B C 305, Seleukos dispatched Megasthenes, an officer of Sibyrtios, the satrap of Arachosia, as his ambassador to the court of Chandragupta at Pâtaliputra on the Sôn, near the confluence of that river with the Ganges, which in those days was situated below the city The modern city of Patna, the civil station of Bankipore, and adjoining villages have been proved by partial excavations to occupy the site of the ancient capital, the remains of which now lie buried at a depth of from ten to twenty feet below the existing surface Megasthenes resided there for a considerable time, and fortunately for posterity, took the trouble to record carefully what he saw and heard The ambassador found the government of the Indian king strong and well organized, established in a magnificent fortified city, worthy to be the capital of a great kingdom The royal camp at the capital was estimated to contain 400,000 souls, and an efficient standing army numbering 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 9,000 elephants, and a multitude of chariots, was maintained at the king's expense. On active service the army is said to have mustered the

huge total of 600,000 men of all arms, a number not incredible in the light of our knowledge of the unwieldy size of the hosts employed by Indian princes in later ages With this overwhelming and well-equipped force Chandragupta, as Plutarch tells us, 'overran and subdued the whole of India,' that is to say, at least all the country to the north of the Narbadâ. His empire, therefore, extended from that river to the Himalaya and Hindû Kush[1]

[1] The chief authority for the history of Chandragupta is Megasthenes His work has been lost, but the pith of it is preserved in extracts or allusions by Arrian, *Anabasis*, Bk v. ch 6, *Indika*, various passages, Q Curtius, Bk viii. ch 9, Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, ch 62, Justin, Bk xv ch 4, Appian, *Syriakê*, ch 55, Strabo, i 53, 57, ii 1 9, xv i 36, Athenaios, *Deipnosophists*, ch 18 *d*, and Pliny, *Hist Nat* vi 19, &c The testimony of Megasthenes concerning all matters which came under his personal observation is trustworthy, and Arrian rightly described him as 'a worthy man' (δόκιμος) Strabo and some other ancient writers censure him unjustly on account of the 'travellers' tales' which he repeated The passages above cited and most of the other references in Greek and Roman authors to India have been carefully translated in Mr McCrindle's works (*Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, Trübner, 1877, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, 2nd ed, 1896, and *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, 1901) Interesting traditional details are given in the *Mudrâ-Râkshasa* drama, which is now believed by some scholars to date from the fifth or sixth century A D. But Mr Keith places it in either the seventh or the ninth century (*J. R A S*, 1909, p 149). The recently discovered *Arthaśâstra* of Chânakya, partly translated by R Shamasastry (G T. A. Press, Mysore, 1908), throws much light on the institutions of the Maurya period and will be utilized in the next chapter The Purânas and the chronicles of Ceylon also give valuable information,

After twenty-four years of stern and vigorous rule, Chandragupta died, and transmitted the immense empire which he had won to his son Bindusâra Amitraghâta, who reigned for twenty-five or, according to other authorities, twenty-eight years.[1] The only recorded public event of his reign, which may be assumed to have begun in either B.C. 298 or 301, according to the chronology adopted, is the dispatch to his court by the King of Syria of an ambassador named Deimachos. The information is of interest as proving that the official intercourse with the Hellenic world begun by Chandragupta was continued by his successor. In the year B.C. 280 Seleukos Nikator, then in the seventy-eighth year of his age, was murdered, and was succeeded on the Syrian throne by his son Antiochos Soter.

Greek writers have preserved curious anecdotes of private friendly correspondence between Seleukos and Chandragupta and between Antiochos and Bindusâra, of value only as indications that the Indian monarchs

and a few particulars are obtainable from other sources. Solinus (McCrindle, *Megasthenes*, p. 156) gives the infantry force as 60,000 only, and the elephants as 8,000.

[1] The name Bindusâra is attested by the Hindu *Vishnu Purâṇa*, the Buddhist *Mahâvaṃśa* and *Dipavaṃśa*, and the Jain *Parisishtaparvan*. The variants in other *Purâṇas* seem to be mere clerical errors. The name or title Amitraghâta ('slayer of foes') is a restoration in Sanskrit of the Amitrochades or Amitrochates of Greek writers, who is stated to have been the son of Chandragupta (Sandrakoptos, &c.). Dr. Fleet prefers to restore Amitrakhâda ('devourer of enemies'), which is said to occur as an epithet of Indra (*J. R. A. S.*, 1909, p. 24).

communicated with their European allies on terms of perfect equality The mission of Dionysios, who was sent to India, and no doubt to the Maurya court, by Ptolemy Philadelphos, King of Egypt (B C. 285–247), must have arrived in the reign of either Bindusâra or his son Asoka Patrokles, an officer who served under both Seleukos and his son, sailed in the Indian seas and collected much geographical information which Strabo and Pliny were glad to utilize

About seven years after the death of Seleukos, Asoka-vardhana, commonly called Asoka, a son of Bindusâra, and the third sovereign of the Maurya dynasty, ascended the throne of Pâtaliputra (B C 273), and undertook the government of the Indian empire, which he held for about forty years According to the silly fictions which disfigure the Ceylonese chronicles and disguise their solid merits, Asoka waded to the throne through a sea of blood, securing his position by the massacre of ninety-nine brothers, one brother only, the youngest, being saved alive These fictions, an extract from which will be found in a later chapter, do not deserve serious criticism, and are sufficiently refuted by the testimony of the inscriptions which proves that the brothers and sisters of the king were still living in the middle of the reign, and that they and all the members of the royal family were the objects of the sovereign's anxious solicitude[1]

[1] Asoka's 'brothers and sisters' are mentioned specifically in Rock Edict V See also Rock Edicts IV and VI, Pillar Edict VII, and the Queen's Edict

The tradition that Asoka, previous to his accession, served his apprenticeship to the art of government as Viceroy first of Taxila, and afterwards of Ujjain, may be accepted, for we know that both viceroyalties were held by princes of the royal family

It seems to be true that the solemn consecration, or coronation, of Asoka was delayed for about four years after his accession in B C 273, and it is possible that the long delay may have been due to a disputed succession involving much bloodshed, but there is no independent evidence of such a struggle The empire won by Chandragupta had passed intact to his son Bindusâra, and when, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, the sceptre was again transmitted from the hands of Bindusâra to those of his son Asoka, it seems unlikely that a prolonged struggle was needed to ensure the succession to a throne so well established and a dominion so firmly consolidated The authentic records give no hint that Asoka's tranquillity was disturbed by internal commotion but on the contrary exhibit him as fully master in his empire, giving orders for execution in the most distant provinces with perfect confidence that they would be obeyed

The numerous inscriptions recorded by Asoka are the leading authority for the events of his reign They are all anonymous, but the evidence in favour of their authorship is conclusive, and the reader need not be troubled by any doubts on the subject[1]

[1] The evidence is fully set forth in the author's essays entitled 'The Authorship of the Piyadasi Inscriptions,' *J R A S*, 1901

A few other inscriptions and traditions preserved in various literary forms help to fill up the outline derived from the primary authority, and by utilizing the available materials of all kinds, we are in a position to compile a tolerably full account of the reign, considering the remoteness of the period discussed, and the well-known deficiency of Hindu literature in purely historical works. The interest of the story is mainly psychological and religious, that is to say, as we read it we watch the development of a commanding personality and the effect of its action in transforming a local Indian sect into one of the leading religions of the world. That interest is permanent, and no student of the history of religion can ignore Asoka, who stands beside St Paul, Constantine, and the Khalîf Omar in the small group of men who have raised to dominant positions religions founded by others.

The dates which follow may be open to slight correction, for various reasons which we need not stop to examine, but the error in any case cannot exceed two years, and the chronology of the reign may be regarded as practically settled in its main outlines. Bearing in mind this liability to immaterial error, we may affirm that Asoka succeeded his father in 273, and four years later, in B.C. 269, was solemnly consecrated to the sacred office of Kingship by the rite of

pp 481–99, and 'The Identity of Piyadasi (Priyadarśin) with Aśoka Maurya, and some connected Problems,' ibid, pp 827–58.

aspersion (*abhisheka*), equivalent to the coronation of European monarchs.[1] Like his fathers before him, Asoka assumed the title of *devânam piya*, which literally means 'dear to the gods,' but is better treated as a formal title, suitably rendered by the phrase current in Stuart times, 'His Sacred Majesty.' He also liked to describe himself as *piyadasi*, literally 'of gracious mien,' another formal royal title, which may be rendered as 'His Grace' or 'His Gracious Majesty.' Asoka's grandfather, Chandragupta, assumed the closely related style of *piyadasana*, 'dear to the sight,' which one of the Ceylonese chronicles applies to Asoka. Thus, when the above two titles were combined with the word *rājā*, or 'king,' Asoka's full royal style was 'His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King.' The complete formula is often used in the inscriptions, but in many cases it is abbreviated.[2]

Nothing authentic is on record concerning the early

[1] Dr. Fleet prefers the term 'anointing,' and states that the liquid poured over the king included 'ghee' or clarified butter (*J. R. A. S.*, 1909, p. 30 note).

[2] The reasons for rendering the royal style as in the text are explained in 'The Meaning of Piyadasi' (*Ind. Ant.*, xxxii (1903), p. 265). Chandragupta is called *piadamsana* in the *Mudrā Rākshasa* (Act vi), which used to be dated in the eighth century, but is now ascribed by some scholars to the Gupta period in the fifth or sixth century (Hillebrandt, *Über das Kautilīyaśāstra*, Breslau, 1908, pp. 26, 30); *contra*, Keith, in *J. R. A. S.*, 1909, p. 149. I do not deny that the chroniclers of Ceylon used Piyadasi and Piyadassana as quasi proper names but I affirm that in the inscriptions the titles are not so used.

years of the reign of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty King Asoka The monkish chroniclers of India and Ceylon, eager to enhance the glory of Buddhism, represent the young king as having been a monster of cruelty before his conversion, and then known as Asoka the Wicked, in contradistinction to Asoka the Pious, his designation after conversion But such tales, specimens of which will be found in Chapters VI and VII, are of no historical value, and should be treated simply as edifying romances Tradition probably is right in stating that Asoka followed the religion of the Brahmans in his early days, with a special devotion to Siva, and we may assume that he led the life of an ordinary Hindu Râjâ of his time We know, because he has told us so himself, that he then had *no objection to sharing in the pleasures of* the chase, or in the free use of animal food, while he permitted his subjects at the capital to indulge in merry-makings accompanied by feasting, wine, and song[1]. Whether or not he waged any wars in those years we do not know There is no reason to suppose that his dominions were less than those of his grandfather and father, and equally little reason for supposing that he made additions to them In his inscriptions he counts his 'regnal years' from the date of his consecration, which may be taken as B.C 269[2], and

[1] Rock Edicts I, VIII

[2] The earliest dated inscriptions are of the thirteenth, and the latest (Pillar Edict VII) of the twenty-eighth 'regnal year,' corresponding respectively with B C 257 and 242 The Minor

he always observed the anniversary of the ceremony by a jail delivery of prisoners condemned to death.

The earliest recorded events belong to the ninth 'regnal year,' B C. 261, the thirteenth from the accession of Asoka In that year he sought to round off his dominions by the conquest of the Kingdom of the Three Kalingas, or Kalinga, on the coast of the Bay of Bengal between the Mahânadî and Godâvarî rivers His arms were successful and the kingdom was annexed to the empire But the horrors which must accompany war, even successful war, made a deep impression on the heart of the victorious monarch, who has recorded on the rocks in imperishable words the sufferings of the vanquished and the remorse of the victor The record is instinct with personal feeling, and still carries across the ages the moan of a human soul The words clearly are those of the king himself, for no Secretary of State would dare to express in such a language 'the profound sorrow and regret' felt by His Sacred Majesty The rocks tell the tale as follows —

'The Kalingas were conquered by His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King when he had been consecrated eight years One hundred and fifty thousand persons were thence carried away captive, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times that number perished

Directly after the annexation of the Kalingas began His Sacred Majesty's protection of the Law of Piety, his love of

Pillar Edicts, which are not dated, may belong to the last year of his life, B C 232 They appear to be certainly later than 242

that Law, and his giving instruction in that Law. Thus arose His Majesty's remorse for having conquered the Kalingas, because the conquest of a country previously unconquered involves the slaughter, death, and carrying away captive of the people That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to His Sacred Majesty The loss of even the hundredth or the thousandth part of the persons who were there slain, carried away captive, or done to death in the Kalingas would now be a matter of regret to His Sacred Majesty'

The royal preacher proceeds to prove in detail the horrors of war, and to draw the lesson that the true conquest is that of piety[1]

After the triumphant conclusion of the war and the annexation of the kingdom Asoka issued two long special edicts prescribing the principles on which both the settled inhabitants and the wild jungle tribes of the conquered provinces should be treated These two edicts, in substitution for three documents published in other localities, were issued in Kalinga only, where they are preserved at two sites, now called Jaugada and Dhauli[2] The conquered territory, no doubt, formed a separate unit of administration, and seems to have been constituted a viceroyalty under a Prince of the royal family stationed at Tosali, a town not precisely identified, but apparently situated in the Puri District of Orissa[3] There is no

[1] Rock Edict XIII

[2] The Kalinga Edicts, formerly called Detached, replacing Nos. XI–XIII of the series published elsewhere

[3] Dhauli versions of the Borderers' Edict

reason to believe that after the subjugation of the Kalingas Asoka ever again waged an aggressive war His officers, the Wardens of the Marches mentioned in the edicts, may or may not have been compelled at times to defend portions of his extended frontiers against the incursions of enemies, but all that we know of his life indicates that once he had begun to devote himself to the love, protection, and teaching of the Law of Piety, or *dharma*, he never again allowed himself to be tempted by ambition into an unprovoked war It is possible that the Kalinga conflict may not have been his first, but certainly it was his last war undertaken voluntarily

The full meaning of the statement that the king's love for and protection of the Law of Piety and his teaching of that Law began directly after the annexation of Kalinga is brought out by comparison with another document (Minor Rock Edict I) published a few months earlier than the edict describing the annexation In the earlier document, three copies of which are addressed to officers in the South through the Prince at Suvarnagiri, who apparently was the Southern Viceroy, and three to other officials, Asoka explains that for more than two years and a half he had been a lay disciple, without exerting himself strenuously, but that for more than a year prior to the publication of the edict he had become a member of the Buddhist Order of monks (*samgha*) and had devoted himself with the utmost energy to the demonstration of the falsity of the popular gods and their

worshippers The total period referred to is consequently somewhere about four years. The conquest of the Kalingas took place in the ninth 'regnal year' (B C 261), while the Rock Edict describing that operation was issued four years later in the thirteenth 'regnal year' (B C. 257) When that edict, which expressly ascribes Asoka's conversion to his remorse for the sufferings caused by the war in the ninth 'regnal year,' is read together with the Minor Rock Edict which traces his progress in virtue for four years, from the condition of a comparatively careless lay disciple to that of a zealous monk, it seems to be a necessary inference that Asoka became a lay disciple under the Buddhist system in his ninth 'regnal year, immediately after the conquest of Kalinga, that he began to be zealous about two and a half years later, when he had been consecrated for about eleven years, and that he attained to a high standard of zeal more than a year subsequently when he began to issue his religious edicts in his thirteenth 'regnal year,' B C 257 He expressly informs us that his earliest inscriptions date from that year [1] The Minor Rock Edict I, of which six copies are known, appears to be the first fruits of the epigraphic zeal of the convert, who longed to make everybody as energetic as himself, and resolved that the imperishable record of his 'purpose must be written on the rocks, both afar off and here, and on a stone pillar, wherever a stone pillar exists' These orders were largely executed and resulted in the

[1] Pillar Edict VI

considerable number of rock and pillar inscriptions now extant and known. Many more probably remain to be discovered, and at least two inscribed pillars are known to have been deliberately destroyed[1]. The period consisting of more than a year, say fifteen or sixteen months, of strenuous exertion appears to have been spent in a rapid tour through his dominions in the course of which he changed camp no less than 256 times

Asoka's conversion to Buddhism, therefore, may be dated in B C 261-260 It is impossible to be more precise because we do not know the exact value of the expressions 'more than two years and a half' and 'more than a year' The transition from the easy-going attitude of the lay disciple to the fervent zeal of the monk was effected when His Majesty, in his eleventh 'regnal year' (B C 259) entered the Order, abolished the Royal Hunt, and substituted pious tours, enlivened only by sermons and religious discussions, for the tours of pleasure which he had enjoyed in his unregenerate days[2]

[1] Namely, Lât Bhairo at Benares, smashed during a riot in 1805, and one at Pâtaliputra, numerous fragments of which were found by the late Bâbû Purna Chandra Mukharjî, as described in an unpublished report The author's paper identifying Lâṭ Bhairo with a pillar described by Hiuen Tsang will appear in *Z D M G* during 1909

[2] This argument was lucidly stated by M Senart in 1886 (*Les Inscriptions de Piyadasi*, tome II, pp 222-45) When the first edition of this book was published I was misled by interpretations of Minor Rock Edict I which now seem to be erroneous

Before proceeding farther in tracing the story of Asoka's religious development, which is the history of his life and reign, it will be convenient to pause and explain the nature of the *dharma*, or Law of Piety, which he loved, protected, and promulgated with all the energy of his temperament and all his power as a mighty sovereign. We must also consider how he managed to reconcile the apparently inconsistent positions of monk and monarch

Dharma, or *Dhamma*, means to a Hindu the rule of life for each man as determined by his caste and station, or, in other words, the whole duty, religious, moral, and social, of a man born to occupy a certain position in the world For many ages past this conception of *dharma* has been inseparably associated with the notions of caste Each caste has its own *dharma*, and conduct most proper for the member of one caste is reprehensible in the highest degree for a member of another In Asoka's time caste, although in some respects less rigid than it has been since the shock of the Muhammadan invasions, which did so much to solidify the institution, was well developed, and the now current Hindu notion of *dharma* does not seem to diverge widely from that then entertained by the followers of the Brahmanical law. The *dhamma* of the Edicts is that Hindu *dharma* with a difference, due to a Buddhist tinge, nay, rather due

The position adopted in this edition, which has the support of Mr F. W Thomas as well as of M Senart, is opposed by Dr Fleet, whose latest article appears in *J R A S*, 1909, p 1

to saturation with the ethical thought which lies at the basis of Buddhism, but occupies a subordinate place in Hinduism The association of the idea of duty with caste is dropped by Asoka, and two virtues, namely, respect for the sanctity of animal life and reverence to parents, superiors, and elders, are given a place far more prominent than that assigned to them in Hindu teaching In short, the ethics of the Edicts are Buddhist rather than Brahmanical This proposition, of course, does not involve contradiction of the equally true statement that Buddhism is a development of Hinduism The marked prominence given to the two specially Buddhist virtues above mentioned suggests so strongly the connotation of the Latin word *pietas* that the phrase 'the Law of Piety,' or sometimes simply 'piety,' or 'the Law' seems to me the best ordinary rendering of *dhamma* in the Edicts, and preferable to 'righteousness,' 'religion,' 'the moral law,' or other renderings favoured by various authors [1]

Many summaries of the *dhamma*, or Law of Piety, are to be found in the Edicts, the most concise being that in Minor Rock Edict II —[2]

'Thus saith His Sacred Majesty —Father and mother must be hearkened to, similarly, respect for living creatures

[1] In the Bhabra Edict the Good Law (*sadhamme*) means the collective sayings of Buddha, the recorded expression of the Law of Piety in its highest form

[2] Other summaries are given in Rock Edicts III, IV, IX, XI, and Pillar Edict VII sec 7

must be firmly established, truth must be spoken These are the virtues of the Law of Piety which must be practised Similarly, the teacher must be reverenced by the pupil, and towards relations proper courtesy should be shown

This is the ancient nature of piety—this leads to length of days, and according to this men should act'

No part of the royal teaching is inconsistent with that pithy abstract, but other documents lay stress on the duties of almsgiving, toleration of all denominations, abstention from evil-speaking, and sundry other virtues One of them defines the Law of Piety as comprising the duties of 'compassion, almsgiving, truth, purity, gentleness, and saintliness[1]' Excellent moral doctrine of such a kind is inculcated over and over again, and men are invited to win both the royal favour and heavenly bliss by acting up to the precepts of the Law

No student of the edicts can fail to be struck by the purely human and severely practical character of the teaching The object avowedly aimed at, as in modern Burma, is the happiness of living creatures, man and beast[2] The teacher assumes that filial piety and the other virtues commended open the path to happiness here and hereafter, but no attempt is made to prove any proposition by reasoning, nor is any value attached to merely intellectual cognition

[1] Pillar Edict VII

[2] 'His religion says to him [the Burmese], "the aim of every man should be happiness," and happiness only to be found by renouncing the whole world' (Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*, p 113)

No foundation of either theology or metaphysics is laid, the ethical precepts inculcated being ordinarily set forth as rules required for practical guidance and self-evidently true One edict only, that of Bhâbrâ, probably early in date, expressly alleges the authority of the Venerable Buddha as the basis of the king's moral doctrine, and that authority undoubtedly is the one foundation of Asoka's ethical system [1]. The king was an earnest student of the Buddhist sacred books, several of which he cites by name, and the edicts throughout are full of words and turns of phrase characteristic of, even if not peculiar to Buddhist literature [2] So long as he felt assured that his teaching was in accordance with that of his Master he needed not to allege any other justification

The authority expressly cited in the Bhâbrâ Edict is understood throughout the whole series, and the only non-Buddhist inscriptions of Asoka are the Barâbar cave dedications in favour of the Âjîvika ascetics, who were more akin to the Jains than to the Buddhists

[1] Having now adopted the opinion of M Senart and Mr F W Thomas that Minor Rock Edict I is the earliest of the series, I am inclined to assign the Bhâbra Edict to the same time That Edict and a version of Minor Rock Edict I were recorded close together near Bairât in Râjputâna

[2] Five out of seven passages cited in the Bhabrâ Edict have been identified in the *Nikâya* portion of the Canon The sayings 'The Good Law will long endure' (Bhâbrâ Edict) and 'All men are my children' (Borderers' Edict) also are canonical M Senart has noted many specially Buddhist words and phrases, throughout the inscriptions

The blessings offered by the Law of Piety, that is to say, the ethical teaching of Buddha, are not to be won by indolent acquiescence in a dogma or formal acceptance of a creed. Asoka's favourite maxim, apparently composed by himself, was the text 'Let small and great exert themselves[1]' He never tires of urging the necessity of exertion and effort, explaining that he himself had set a good example of hard work

'Whatever exertions,' he observes, 'His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King makes, all are for the sake of the life hereafter, so that every one may be freed from peril, which peril is vice. Difficult, however, it is to attain such freedom, whether by people of low or of high degree, save by the utmost exertion and giving up all other aims That, however, for him of high degree is exceedingly difficult[2]' But 'even by the small man, if he chooses to exert himself, immense heavenly bliss may be won[3]'

This doctrine of the need for continual self-sustained exertion in order to attain the highest moral level is fully in accordance with numerous passages in the *Dhammapada* and other early Buddhist scriptures The saying about the difficulties of the man of high degree, recalls, as do many other Buddhist aphorisms, familiar Biblical texts, but the spirit of the Bible is totally different from that of Asoka's teaching The Bible, whether in the Old Testament or the New, insists upon the relation of man with God, and upon

[1] Minor Rock Edict I
[2] Rock Edict X
[3] Minor Rock Edict I (Brahmagiri text)

man's dependence on the grace of God Asoka, on the contrary, in accordance with the practice of his Master, ignores, without denying, the existence of a Supreme Deity, and insists that man should by his own exertions free himself from vice, and by his own virtue win happiness here and hereafter As it is said in the *Dhammapada*

By ourselves is evil done,
By ourselves we pain endure,
By ourselves we cease from wrong,
By ourselves become we pure

No one saves us but ourselves,
No one can and no one may,
We ourselves must tread the Path
Buddhas only show the way

The same self-reliant doctrine is taught at this day in Burma, where 'each man is responsible for himself, each man is the maker of himself Only he can do himself good by good thoughts, by good acts, only he can hurt himself by evil intentions and deeds[1]' The Buddhist attitude is akin to the Stoic, and directly opposed to the Christian

So much exposition may suffice to enable the reader to understand the general nature of the Buddhist *dhamma*, or Law of Piety, as taught by Asoka Special topics of the doctrine will be discussed later, as occasion arises

[1] Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*, p 226. Contrast the teaching of the Church Catechism —'My good Child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to

The fact is undoubted that Asoka was both monk and monarch at the same time. The belief held by some learned writers that he had abdicated before he assumed the monastic robe is untenable, being opposed to the plain testimony of the edicts We have seen that the earliest of them, unquestionably issued by Asoka as sovereign, expressly states that at the time of issue (B C 257) he had been for more than a year exerting himself strenuously as a member of the Buddhist *Samgha*, or Order of Monks, the organized monastic Church, of which the sovereign had assumed the headship Throughout his reign he retained the position of Head of the Church and Defender of the Faith His latest proclamations, the Minor Pillar Edicts, issued at some time during the last ten years of the reign, exhibit him as actively engaged in protecting the Church against the dangers of schism and issuing his orders for the disciplinary punishment of schismatics. In the Bhâbrâ Edict, seemingly of early date, we find him describing himself as 'King of Magadha,' and using his royal authority in order to recommend to his subjects seven favourite passages selected by himself from the sacred books [1] That edict was recorded on a boulder within the precincts of a monastery on the top of a hill in Râjputâna, and the presumption is that the sovereign was residing in

walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace'

[1] The correct reading is *Mâgadhe*, agreeing with *lâjâ*, and not *Mâgadham*, agreeing with *Saṃgham* (Bloch)

the monastery when he issued the orders, which are on record there only A copy of the Minor Rock Edict I in which he gives a summary of his early religious history is engraved on a rock at the foot of another hill close by The inscriptions give no support to the late legends which represent the great emperor as a dotard in his old age, and suggest that he abdicated his sovereign functions. His authentic records show him to have been the same man throughout his career from 257 to the end, a zealous Buddhist, and at the same time a watchful, vigorous, autocratic ruler of Church and State

How did he manage to reconcile the vows and practices of a Buddhist monk with the duties and responsibilities of the sovereign of an enormous empire? It is not possible to give a complete answer, but fairly satisfactory explanations can be presented The pilgrim I-tsing in the seventh century notes that the statue of Asoka represented him as wearing a monk's robe of a particular pattern[1] He does not seem to have been offended by any incongruity in the situation, and his attitude may be explained by the fact that he knew a Chinese Emperor to have done the same thing It is recorded that Kao-tsu Wu ti (alias Hsiao-Yen), the first emperor of the Liang dynasty, who reigned from A D 502 to 549, was 'a devout Buddhist, living upon priestly fare and taking only one meal a day, and on two occasions, in

[1] Takakusu, translation of I tsing, *A Record of Buddhist Practices*, p 73

527 and 529, he actually adopted the priestly garb[1].' Du Halde relates of this emperor that—

'He was not without eminent qualities, being active, laborious, and vigilant, he managed all his affairs himself, and dispatched them with wonderful readiness, he was skilled in almost all the sciences, particularly the military art, and was so severe upon himself, and so thrifty, as 'tis said, that the same cap served him three years, his fondness at last for the whimsical conceits of the bonzes carried him so far as to neglect intirely the concerns of the State, and to become in effect a bonze himself, he put out an edict forbidding to kill oxen or sheep even for the sacrifices, and appointed ground corn to be offered instead of beasts[2].'

A large part of Du Halde's description applies accurately to Asoka, but I see no reason to believe that the Indian monarch resembled his Chinese imitator in entirely neglecting affairs of State during his later years

However exact or inexact the parallel may be in detail, it holds good for the main fact that both Asoka and Wu-ti succeeded somehow in combining the duties of monk and monarch

A slightly less exact parallel to Asoka's action is offered by the case of the Jain Kumârapâla, King of Gujarât in the twelfth century, who assumed the title of 'Lord of the Order,' and at various periods of his reign took vows of continence, temperance, abstention from animal food, and refraining from confiscation of

[1] Giles, *Chinese Literature* (1901), p 133

[2] Du Halde, *History of China*, Engl transl, 3rd ed (London, 1741), vol 1, p 381

the property of the faithful Indeed, the whole story of Kumârapâla's proceedings after his conversion to Jainism offers the best possible commentary on the history of Asoka [1]

The legend of Vîtâsoka, the hermit brother of Asoka according to one form of the story, who was permitted to beg his alms within the palace precincts, is good evidence to show that people were accustomed to arrangements making asceticism easy for princes [2].

We must further remember that the Buddhist ceremony (*upasampadâ*) of full admission to the Order, commonly, but inaccurately, called 'ordination,' does not convey indelible 'orders' or involve a lifelong vow In both Burma and Ceylon men commonly enter the Order temporarily, and after a time, long or short, resume civil life Asoka could have done the same, as Wu-ti afterwards did in China, and a proceeding easy for an ordinary man is doubly easy for an emperor In short, although we do not know the details of the arrangements by which Asoka reconciled his monastic obligations with his duties as sovereign, we know as a fact that he arranged the

[1] Buhler, *Ueber das Leben des Jaina Mönches Hemachandra* (Wien, 1889), pp 29-42

[2] Il se mit a parcourir en mendiant les appartements intérieurs, mais il recevait de tres bons aliments Le roi dit aux femmes des appartements intérieurs Donnez-lui des aliments semblables a ceux que ramassent les Religieux qui mendient' (Burnouf, *Introduction a l'Histoire du Buddhisme Indien*, 2e éd, p 375, with Burnouf's necessary emendations)

difficulty somehow, and the parallel cases enable us to understand how the business could be settled in more ways than one[1]

Having now defined the nature of the *dhamma*, or Law of Piety, which Asoka made it the business of his life to preach and propagate, and having shown how the apparently inconsistent rôles of monk and monarch could be reconciled in practice, we may resume his life story We have seen that his ninth 'regnal year' (B C 261) was the turning-point of his career, that he then began to love, protect, and preach the Buddhist Law of Piety as a lay disciple, and that two and a half years later he assumed the monastic robe, abolished the Royal Hunt, and instituted 'pious tours'

The memory of such a 'pious tour in his twenty-first 'regnal year' (B C 249) is preserved by the commemorative records on the Rummindeî and Niglîva pillars in the Nepalese Tarâi, where there is reason to believe that other similar pillars exist Those records prove that Asoka visited the 'Lumbini garden, the traditional scene of the birth of Gautama Buddha, and also paid reverence to the *stûpa* of Konâkamana, or Kanakamuni, the 'former Buddha,' which he had already enlarged six years earlier It is interesting

[1] Bodoahprâ, the ferocious king of Burma, who reigned from 1781 to 1819, and claimed descent from Asoka (Phayre, *History of Burma*, 1884, p 235), proclaimed himself to be a Buddha, and dwelt for some time in a monastery, but tired of it, resumed power, and reverted to his evil ways (*Calc Rev*, 1872, p 136)

to learn that the cult of the 'former Buddhas,' a subject imperfectly understood, was already well established in Asoka's days, but no one can tell how or when it originated

The memory of the same pilgrimage was preserved also by literary tradition, as recorded in the Sanskrit romance called the *Asokâvadâna* According to the story, which will be found in a later chapter, the king, under the guidance of his preceptor, a saint named Upagupta, visited in succession the Lumbini garden, Kapilavastu, the scene of Buddha's childhood, the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gayâ, Rishipattana, or Sârnâth, near Benares, Kusinagara, where Buddha died, the Jetavana monastery at Srâvastî, where he long resided, the *stûpa* of Vakkula and the *stûpa* of Ânanda The words graven on the Rummindeî pillar, 'Here the Venerable One was born,' are those ascribed by the tradition to Upagupta as spoken when he guided his royal master to the holy spot Asoka bestowed great largess at every place except the *stûpa* of Vakkula, where he gave only a single copper coin, because that saint had met with few obstacles to surmount, and had consequently done little good to his fellow creatures The explanation accords well with the severely practical character of Asoka's piety [1]

[1] Rummindeî on the Tilâr river certainly is the site of the Lumbini garden (see Plate II) The Kapilavastu visited by Hiuen Tsang is represented by Tilaurâ Kôt (Mukherji and V A Smith, *Antiquities in the Tarâi, Nepâl*, *Archaeol S Rep* *Imp S*, vol xxvi, 1901) Bodh Gayâ, six miles south of Gayâ, is

The preceptor Upagupta, who probably converted Asoka, as Hemachandra converted Kumârapâla in a later age, seems to have been a real historical personage. The famous monastery at Mathurâ which bore his name appears to have been situated at the Kankâlî Tîla, a Buddhist as well as a Jain site, and his memory was also associated with various localities in Sind He is said to have been the son of Gupta the perfumer In the traditions of Ceylon his place is taken by Tissa, the son of Mogali, who should be regarded as a fictitious person made up from the names of Buddha's two principal disciples, as ingeniously argued by Colonel Waddell [1]

The eleventh 'regnal year' (B C 259), memorable

well known The interesting discoveries lately made at Sârnâth include an important new edict of Asoka (see *post*). The site of Kusinagara has not been finally determined I believe it to have been near Tribeni Ghât, where the Little Râptî joins the Gandak (*E Hist India*, 2nd ed, p 148 *n*) See also the author's work, *The Remains near Kasia, the reputed Site of Kuçanagara* (Allahabad, 1896), 'Kusinârâ or Kuśinagara,' *J R A S*, 1902, *Archaeol S, Annual Rep*, 1904–5 The site of Śrâvastî is disputed I still believe it to be in Nepalese territory on the upper course of the Râptî, but *contra*, Vogel, 'The site of Srâvastî,' *J R A S*, 1908, p 971 The curious legend of Bakkula or Vakkula is told in the *Bakkula-sutta* (*J R A S*, 1903, p 373) There were two *stûpas* of Ananda, one on each side of the Ganges (Legge, *Travels of Fa-hien*, ch xxvi, Hiuen Tsang) For the *Asokâvadâna* see Burnouf, *Introduction a l'Histoire du Buddhisme*, or Râjendralâl Mitra, *Sanskrit Nepalese Literature*

[1] Mr Growse placed the Upagupta monastery at the Kankâlî mound (*Mathurâ*, 3rd ed, p 122) For references to other books and papers see Asoka's 'Father-Confessor' in *Ind Ant*, 1903, p 365

as the date from which Asoka began to exert himself strenuously as Head of the Church and prophet of the *dhamma*, was marked, not only by the abolition of the Royal Hunt and the substitution of tours devoted to works of piety for the pleasure excursions of other days, but by a much more important measure, the most important ever taken by Asoka, and one which to this day bears much fruit In or about the year mentioned he took the momentous resolution of organizing a network of preaching missions to spread the teaching of his Master, not only throughout and on the borders of his own wide empire, but in the distant regions of Western Asia, Eastern Europe, and Northern Africa Rock Edict XIII, published with the rest of the Fourteen Rock Edicts in the fourteenth 'regnal year' (B C 256), gives a detailed list of the countries to which the imperial missionaries of the Law of Piety had been dispatched We are told that His Majesty sought the conversion of even the wild forest tribes, and that missions were sent to the nations on the borders of his empire, who are enumerated as the Yonas, Kâmbojas, Nâbhapamtis of Nâbhaka, Bhojas, Pitenikas, Ândhras, and Pulindas, that is to say, various more or less civilized tribes occupying the slopes of the Himalaya, the regions beyond the Indus, and parts of the Deccan and Central India, which were under imperial control, although not included in the settled provinces administered by the emperor or his viceroys Envoys were also sent to the Chola and Pândya kingdoms of the extreme

south of the peninsula and to the island of Ceylon, which were wholly independent But these operations, extensive though they were, did not satisfy the zeal of Asoka, who ventured to send his proselytizing agents far beyond the limits of India, into the dominions of Antiochos Theos, King of Syria and Western Asia (B C 261–246), Ptolemy Philadelphos, King of Egypt (B C 285–247), Magas, King of Cyrene in Northern Africa, half-brother of Ptolemy (about B C 285–258), Antigonos Gonatas, King of Macedonia (B C 277–239), and Alexander, King of Epirus (acc B C 272) Rock Edict V adds to the list of border nations given above the names of the Râshtrikas of the Marâthâ country, and the Gândhâras of the Peshâwar frontier, noting that there were yet others unnamed, while Rock Edict II, which again names Antiochos, with a reference to his Hellenistic neighbours, as well as the Cholas, Pândyas, and Ceylon, adds the Satiyaputra and Keralaputra kingdoms of the Western coast to the catalogue of countries in which curative arrangements for man and beast were carried out The date of the missions is fixed approximately by the fact that the year B C 258 is the latest in which all the Greek sovereigns named were alive together The statements in the two edicts quoted constitute almost the whole of the primary and absolutely trustworthy evidence concerning Asoka's missionary organization

• The Ceylonese chronicles, the earliest of which was composed by Buddhist monks about six centuries

after the Edicts, give a different list of countries and add the names of the missionaries as follows :—

	Country	*Missionaries*
1	Kashmir and Gandhâra (Peshâwar, &c.)	Majjhantika
2	Mahîśamandala (Mysore)	Mahâdeva
3	Vanavâsi (North Kanara)	Rakkhita.
4	Aparantaka (coast north of Bombay	Yona-Dharmarakkhita.
5	Mahârattha (West Central India)	Maha Dharmarakkhita
6	Yona region (N W frontier provinces)	Mahârakkhita.
7	Himavanta (the Himalayan region)	Majjhima, Kassapa, &c.
8	Suvannabhumi (Pegu and Moulmein)	Soṇa and Uttara.
9	Lankâ (Ceylon)	Mahinda (Mahendra), &c.

All the names of countries in this list, except No 8, can be easily reconciled with the differently worded enumeration in the inscriptions The inclusion of No 8, Suvaṇṇabhûmi, which is identified by the best authorities with the Pegu and Moulmein territories on the shores of the Gulf of Martaban, is I believe an error The latest researches indicate that Burma, as a halfway house between India and China, first received Buddhism during the fourth century A D in two streams converging from China on one side and northern India on the other, and that the connexion between the Churches of Ceylon and Burma dates from a time much later [1]

The exclusion of the Hellenistic kingdoms from the Ceylon list is easily explained when we remember that those kingdoms had ceased to exist centuries before that list was compiled The omission of the Tamil

[1] The argument is worked out at length in the author's essay, 'Asoka's alleged Mission to Pegu (Suvannabhûmi),' *Ind Ant*, xxxiv (1905), pp 180–6) and is carried further in Mr Taw Sein Ko's *Progress Report of the Archaeol S Burma* for 1905–6.

countries of Southern India may be ascribed to the secular hostility between the Sinhalese and the Tamils of the mainland, which naturally would indispose the oppressed Sinhalese to recognize the ancestors of their oppressors as having been brothers in the faith The island monks were eager to establish the derivation of their religion direct from Magadha through the agency of Mahinda and his mythical sister, and had no desire to recall the bygone days of friendly intercourse with the hated Tamils Sound principles of historical criticism require that when the evidence of the inscriptions differs from that of later literary traditions, the epigraphic authority should be preferred without hesitation, and there is no reason to doubt the reality of the missions to the Tamil kingdoms of the south

The Ceylon tradition as to the names of the missionaries is partially confirmed by Cunningham's discoveries at the Bhîlsâ topes or *stûpas* near Sânchî, which included relic caskets bearing the name of 'Kâsapa Gota, missionary (*âchariya*) of the whole Hemavanta,' or Himalayan region Other caskets bore the name of Majjhima[1] But when the chronicler ascribes to the monk Tissa, son of Mogali, all the credit for the organization of the missions, and ignores Asoka, we are clearly bound to apply the principle of preferring the authority of the contemporary inscriptions, and to allow Asoka the honour of having personally organized,

[1] *Bhilsa Topes*, pp 287, 289, 317, pl xx The finding of a casket inscribed *Mogaliputasa* does not establish the real existence of the Ceylonese Tissa, son of Mogali, as distinct from Upagupta

with the aid of his enormous imperial power, the most comprehensive scheme of religious missionary enterprise recorded in the history of the world. The scheme was not only comprehensive but successful It resulted in Buddhism quickly becoming the dominant religion throughout India and Ceylon, and in its ultimate extension over Burma, Siam, Cambodia, the Indian Archipelago, China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Tibet, and other countries of Asia In some of these countries Buddhism did not effect its entry until centuries after the time of Asoka, but the diffusion of the religion in them all was due to the impetus given by the great Buddhist emperor of India, who transformed the creed of a local Indian sect into a world-religion, the most important of all the religions, perhaps, if the numbers of its adherents be taken as the test

The obvious comparison of Asoka with Constantine suggests the thought that the action of the Indian monarch was far more influential than that of the Roman emperor, whose official patronage of Christianity was rather an act of tardy and politic submission to a force already irresistible than the willing devotion of an enthusiastic believer [1] If Constantine had not

[1] 'When Constantine, partly perhaps from a genuine moral sympathy, yet doubtless far more in the well-grounded belief that he had more to gain from the zealous sympathy of its professors than he could lose by the aversion of those who still cultivated a languid paganism, took Christianity to be the religion of the empire, it was already a great political force, able, and not more able than willing, to repay him by aid and submission' (Freeman, *Holy Roman Empire* (1892), p 10)

adopted the Christian creed himself, his successors would have been compelled to do so, but if Asoka had withheld his heartfelt adherence to the teaching of Buddha there is no reason to suppose that the doctrine had strength enough to impose itself upon the faith of India and half of the civilized world Gautama Buddha lived, moved, and died within a small territory in and near Magadha, and there is no indication that during the interval (B C 487–259) which elapsed between his death and the dispatch of missions by Asoka the Buddhist teaching had made any great noise in the world or was known beyond very narrow limits, nor is there any reason to believe that Asoka was constrained by political reasons to make a virtue of necessity and yield to the demands of an imperious priesthood We watch in the personal records drafted by himself the gradual growth of his sincere convictions and the orderly development of the policy which consecrated his immense autocratic power and diplomatic influence as the sovereign of one of the greatest empires in the world to the service of the religion which had captured his heart and intellect

An abstract of the monastic legends of Ceylon and India which purport to describe the conversion of Ceylon will be found in Chapters VI and VII They cannot be accepted as history, and, in reality, the conversion of the island must have been a process much slower then it is represented to have been But we do not possess any authoritative account of what actually happened The only references to

Ceylon in the edicts are those already cited, which simply mention the island as one of the foreign friendly kingdoms to which missionaries were dispatched and in which Asoka was permitted to extend his system of curative arrangements for man and beast I disbelieve wholly in the tale of Sanghamitrâ, the supposed daughter of Asoka. Her name, which means 'Friend of the Order,' is extremely suspicious, and the inscriptions give no indication of her existence Professor Oldenberg has much justification for his opinion that the story of Mahinda and his sister seems to have been—

'invented for the purpose of possessing a history of the Buddhist institutions in the island, and to connect it with the most distinguished person conceivable—the great Asoka The historical legend is fond of poetically exalting ordinary occurrences into great and brilliant actions, we may assume that, in reality, things were accomplished in a more gradual and less striking manner than such legends make them appear[1]'

The naturalization in Ceylon of the immense mass of Buddhist literature now existing in Pâli and, I believe, also in Sinhalese, must necessarily have been a work of time, and would seem to be the fruit of long and continuous intercourse between Ceylon and the adjacent parts of India, rather than the sudden result of direct communication with Magadha The statements of the Chinese pilgrims in the fifth and seventh centuries prove that Asoka's

[1] *Introduction to the Vinayapitakam*, p 4 (ii)

efforts to propagate Buddhism in the far South were not in vain, and that monastic institutions existed in the Tamil countries which were in a position to influence the faith of the island Hiuen Tsang mentions one *stûpa* in the Chola country, and another in the Drâvida or Pallava kingdom as being ascribed to Asoka Still more significant is his description of the state of religion in A D 640 in the Malakûta Pândya country to the south of the Kâviri (Cauvery), where he found that—

'Some follow the true doctrine, others are given to heresy They do not esteem learning much, but are wholly given to commercial gain There are the ruins of many old convents, but only the walls are preserved, and there are few religious followers There are many hundred Deva [Brahmanical] temples, and a multitude of heretics, mostly belonging to the Nirgranthas [Jains]

Not far to the east of this city [the unnamed capital, ? Madura] is an old *sanghârâma* [monastery] of which the vestibule and court are covered with wild shrubs, the foundation walls only survive This was built by Mahendra, the younger brother of Asoka-raja

To the east of this is a *stûpa* the lofty walls of which are buried in the earth, and only the crowning part of the cupola remains This was built by Asoka-raja [1]'

This interesting passage, which shows how vivid the traditions of Asoka and his brother continued

[1] Beal, *Records of the Western World*, ii 231, instead of 'only the walls are preserved,' Watters renders 'very few monasteries were in preservation,' which agrees with the context and seems to be correct (*On Yuan Chwang*, ii 228)

to be in the south after the lapse of nine centuries, and locates Mahendra in a monastery to the south of the Kâviri, within easy reach of Ceylon, goes a long way to support the hypothesis that Mahendra really passed over to the island from a southern port on the mainland That hypothesis is certainly much more probable than the Ceylonese story that he came flying through the air, 'as flies the king of swans' Nor is it likely that his first discourse converted the king and forty thousand of his subjects

But, notwithstanding the mythology which has gathered round his name, Mahendra or Mahinda, the younger brother of Asoka, was a real, historical personage, and there can be no doubt that he was a pioneer in the diffusion of Buddhism in Ceylon The concurrence of Indian and Ceylonese traditions, and the existence of monuments bearing his name both in the island and on the mainland do not permit of scepticism as to his reality But the Ceylonese version of the story which represents him as an illegitimate son of Asoka is unsupported, and is opposed to the Indian tradition as current in both Northern and Southern India, at Pâtaliputra and at Kânchî (Conjeeveram), and reported by Fa-hien at the beginning of the fifth century, as well as by Hiuen Tsang in A D 640 Even the monks of Ceylon, who met the later pilgrim at Kânchî, and told him the accepted legend of the conversion of their country, knew Mahendra as the younger

brother, not the son of Asoka[1]. It is obvious that the true form of the tradition was more likely to survive at Pâtaliputra, the ancient capital, than anywhere else, and Fa-hien when there about A D 400 heard anecdotes concerning Asoka's hermit brother[2], who is named Mahendra by Hiuen Tsang. Other forms of the legend call him Vîtâsoka or Vigatâsoka, but the evidence of the monuments in India and Ceylon fixes his name as Mahendra or Mahinda

The assumption of the monastic robe by the emperor's younger brother, or rather half-brother on the mother's side, was quite in accordance with precedent and rule 'According to the laws of India,' says a Chinese historian, 'when a king dies, he is succeeded by his eldest son (*Kumârarâja*), the others leave the family and embrace a religious life, and they are no longer allowed to reside in their native kingdom[3].' In Tibet the rule was varied in the case of the famous king Ral-pa-chan (died A. D 838), who allowed his *elder* brother, Gtsang-ma, to enter the Order, and was succeeded by his *younger* brother[4]. Other parallel cases might be cited to justify the assertion of Prof Jacobi that 'the spiritual career in India, just as the Church in Roman Catholic countries, seems to have offered a field for the ambition of younger sons[5].' We may

[1] Beal, *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, p 144

[2] Legge, *Travels of Fa hien*, p 77, chap xxvii

[3] Ma-twan-lin in *Ind Ant*, ix 22

[4] Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, p. 225 [5] *S B E*, xxii, p. 15

feel assured that Mahendra or Mahinda, the apostle of Ceylon, was the brother, not the son of Asoka. As to the conversion of the king and people of the island, my opinion is that it was only begun by Mahendra, that Sanghamitrâ his supposed sister never existed, and that the chroniclers' accounts of Mahendra's proceedings should be treated as edifying romances resting on a basis of fact, the extent of which cannot be determined precisely.

The thirteenth and fourteenth 'regnal years' (B.C. 257-256) were busy ones for Asoka, marking great advance in his spiritual development and religious policy. Two (Nos. III and IV) of the Fourteen Rock Edicts are expressly dated in the thirteenth, while No. V is dated in the fourteenth 'regnal year.' In the localities where all the fourteen edicts occur it is clear that the whole set was engraved at once. The publication, therefore, may be dated in B.C. 256. The two special Kalinga Edicts, which were substituted in the newly conquered province for Nos. XI-XIII of the series, may be assigned to the same period, which also witnessed the dedication of costly caves in the Barâbar Hills near Gayâ to the use of the non-Buddhist Âjîvika ascetics and the institution of quinquennial official circuits for the purpose of public instruction in the Law of Piety[1]. Officers of all ranks, when touring in their several jurisdictions were directed to undertake the business of propaganda in addition to their ordinary duties.

[1] Rock Edict III.

The Kalinga Provincials' Edict, by a supplementary clause, modified the general orders and instructed the Princes of Ujjain and Taxila to have the circuits performed at intervals of three years only Elaborate arrangements were made for ensuring full publicity to the royal commands

Another important administrative measure was taken in the fourteenth 'regnal year' (B. C 256) by the appointment for the first time of special officers of high rank, entitled *Dharma-mahâmâtras*, that is to say, *mahâmâtras*, or superior officials, exclusively engaged in the enforcement of the edicts concerning *dharma*, or the Law of Piety, and additional to the ordinary civil *mahâmâtras* These officers may be described conveniently as Censors, and similar appointments have been made under the name of *Dharmâdhikâris* in Kashmîr and other Hindu states in modern times[1] Asoka attached high importance to the organization of the body of Censors, who received very comprehensive instructions to enforce the Law of Piety among all religious denominations, among the Yonas and other border tribes, and even in the households of the sovereign's brothers, sisters, and other relatives[2] They were assisted by subordinate officials termed *Dharmayuktas*[3]

In the following year (fifteenth 'regnal,' B C 255)

[1] *Ind Ant.*, xxxii (1903), p 365 The word 'minister' would be a good rendering of *mahâmâtra*, in some cases at all events

[2] Rock Edict V, Pillar Edict VII

[3] The subordinate civil officials were known simply as *yuktas*, or *âyuktas*

Asoka enlarged for the second time the *stûpa* of the 'former Buddha' Konâkamana, or Kanakamuni, which he visited personally six years later The relation of the cult of the 'former Buddhas' to the religion of Gautama, as already observed, is a subject concerning which very little is known

In the twentieth 'regnal year,' B C 250, the sovereign presented a third costly rock-dwelling to the Âjîvikas, and in the year following, B.C. 249 made the pilgrimage to the holy places of Buddhism already noticed The dated record is then interrupted until the twenty-seventh 'regnal year,' B C 243, when Pillar Edict VI, dealing with the necessity that every man should have a definite creed, was composed The dated series of inscriptions as discovered up to the present terminates in B C 242 with Pillar Edict VII, comprising ten distinct sections or separate edicts, and giving a comprehensive review of the measures taken during the reign for the propagation of the Law of Piety

The Minor Pillar Edicts of Sârnâth Allahabad-Kausâmbî, and Sânchî must be later in date because the position and mode of engraving the Queen's and Kausâmbî Edicts on the Allahabad pillar, which evidently was removed from Kausâmbî, indicate clearly that the short records are supplementary and posterior to the main series of Pillar Edicts on the same monument The Kausâmbî and Sânchî documents are merely variants of the Sârnâth Edict The Queen's Edict treats of another subject

Inasmuch as the Sârnâth Edict and its variants deal with the disciplinary punishment to be inflicted on schismatic persons and emphatically declare the imperial resolve that no rending in twain of the Church should be permitted, it is reasonable to connect those orders with the Buddhist Council which tradition affirms to have been convened by Asoka at his capital for the purpose of suppressing heresy The Ceylonese books date the Council either sixteen or eighteen years after the consecration of Asoka, but that date must be erroneous, because if the Council had been convened before the twenty-eighth 'regnal year,' it would surely have been mentioned in the seventh Pillar Edict, which reviews all the measures taken up to that date by the sovereign for the advancement of the Law of Piety The Council, however, may well have taken place in any one of the ten or eleven years intervening between the last dated edict and the close of the reign It is said in various traditions to have been concerned with the overthrow of heresy, and if there be any truth in that story, the Sârnâth Edict and its variants may be regarded as embodying the resolution of the Council, and may be dated in one or other of the years near the end of the reign [1]

[1] The value of the traditions of the Councils is discussed at length in the author's essay 'The Identity of Piyadasi (Priyadarśin) with Aśoka Maurya and some connected Problems,' *J R A S*, 1901, pp 842–58, and also by M Poussin in *Ind Ant*, 1908, and by Professor R. Otto Franke (transl. Mrs Rhys

Having thus traced Asoka's religious history in chronological order as far as positive dates are available, we shall now proceed to discuss certain features of his policy which cannot be treated with equal chronological accuracy Several edicts record the successive steps taken by the king to give effect to the principle of the sanctity of animal life, which was one of his cardinal doctrines In the early years of his reign Asoka was not troubled by any scruples on the subject, and he confesses in the first Rock Edict, it is to be hoped with some exaggeration, that 'formerly in the kitchen of his Sacred and Gracious Majesty each day many hundred thousand of living creatures were slaughtered to make curries' Afterwards, presumably from the time when he became a lay disciple, or, perhaps from the eleventh 'regnal year,' the slaughter was reduced to 'two peacocks and one antelope—the antelope, however, not invariably' From the thirteenth 'regnal year' all killing for the royal table was stopped The same edict prohibits at the capital the celebration of animal sacrifices and merry-makings involving the use of meat, but in the provinces such practices apparently continued to be lawful The suppression of the Royal Hunt some two years later than his conversion marked an intermediate stage in the monarch's growing devotion to his favourite doctrine The final development of his

Davids) in *J Pāli Text Soc*, 1908 Any attempt to reconstruct a narrative of the actual proceedings of the Council from the conflicting traditions is hopeless

policy in this matter is defined by Pillar Edict V, dated B C 243, which lays down an elaborate code of regulations restricting the slaughter and mutilation of animals throughout the empire Those regulations were imposed on all classes of the population without distinction of creed, social customs, or religious sentiment A long list was published of animals the slaughter of which was absolutely prohibited, and other rules prescribed restrictions on the slaughter of animals permitted to be killed, and prohibited or limited the practice of different kinds of mutilation Asoka could not venture to absolutely forbid the castration of bulls, he-goats, rams and boars, but he regarded the practice as unholy, and prohibited it on all holy days, amounting to about a quarter of the year The branding of horses and cattle was treated in the same spirit On fifty-six days the capture or sale of fish was prohibited, and on the same days, even in game preserves, animals might not be destroyed The caponing of cocks was declared to be absolutely unlawful at all times

The practical working of such minutely detailed rules must have been almost intolerably vexatious, and they cannot fail to have pressed with painful harshness upon people who believed sacrifice on certain days to be necessary to salvation and on many classes of the working population The insistence on the display of energy by the Censors and all classes of officials in carrying out the imperial commands must have produced a crowd of informers and an immense

amount of tyranny Regard for the sanctity of animal life, even that of the meanest vermin, is not peculiar to Buddhism, being practised even more strictly by the Jains, and esteemed more or less highly by most Brahmanical Hindus It rests on the theory of re-birth, which underlies nearly all forms of Indian religion, and binds together in one chain all classes of living creatures, whether gods or demi-gods, angels or demons, men or animals But, although that doctrine had been familiar to the mind of India for ages, its strict enforcement to a certain extent as part of the civic duty of every loyal subject, irrespective of his personal religious belief, was a new thing, and imposed a novel burden on the lieges The regulations must have had permanent influence in obtaining the general acceptance of ideas formerly restricted to sections of the population It is noteworthy that Asoka's rules do not forbid the slaughter of cows, which, apparently, continued to be lawful The problem of the origin of the intense feeling of reverence for the cow, now felt by all Hindus, is a very curious one and still unsolved The early Brahmans did not share the sentiment

The doctrine of the duty of reverence to parents, seniors, and teachers seems to have held in Asoka's eyes a place second only to that of the sanctity of animal life It is reiterated over and over again in the Edicts, but no development of the principle is traceable

The sanctity attaching to the life of the most in-

significant insect was not extended to the life of man. The monkish legend that Asoka abolished the death penalty is not true. His legislation proves that the idea of such abolition never entered his thoughts, and that like other Buddhist monarchs, he regarded the extreme penalty of the law as an unavoidable necessity, which might be made less horrible than it had been, but could not be dispensed with. Late in his reign, in B.C. 243, he published an ordinance that every prisoner condemned to death should invariably be granted before execution a respite of three days in which to prepare himself for the next world. This slight mitigation of the usual practice of Indian despots, whose sentence was commonly followed by instant or almost instant execution, is all that Asoka claims credit for. The inferior value attaching to human as compared with animal life presumably is due to the fact that men are responsible for their deeds while animals are not. In later times Hindu Râjâs have not hesitated to execute a man for killing a beast, and it is unlikely that Asoka was less severe.

One of the most noticeable features in the teaching of Asoka is the enlightened religious toleration which is so frequently and emphatically recommended. If we are right in regarding Minor Rock Edict I as the earliest in date of all the inscriptions, some progress in his attitude towards toleration may perhaps be traced. That document records with exultation the monarch's belief that his strenuous exertion had produced as its fruit the result that 'the men (*scil.* the

Brahmans) who were, all over India, regarded as true, have been with their gods shown to be untrue.' Such language has the appearance of having been prompted by intemperate zeal. Perhaps it proved to be unpopular and dangerous. Certainly it does not recur, and the later documents, even those issued apparently in the same year, breathe a different spirit. They repeatedly enjoin the duty of almsgiving to Brahman as well as Buddhist ascetics; the king, using his Master's words, declares all men to be his children, announces his impartial consideration for all denominations, including Jains and Âjîvikas, and implores people to abstain from speaking ill of their neighbours' faith. He sees good in all creeds, and is persuaded that men of all faiths perform, at any rate, a part of the commandment. So much may be gathered from the Fourteen Rock Edicts of B.C. 257 and 256. The sixth Pillar Edict of B.C. 243 goes a little further and insists on the necessity for every person having a definite creed. 'I devote my attention,' Asoka observes, 'to all communities, for all denominations are reverenced by me with various forms of reverence. Nevertheless, personal adherence to one's own creed is the chief thing in my opinion.' These latitudinarian views did not, as we have seen, prevent him from imposing very stringent rules of conduct on persons of all ranks and classes, irrespective of their religious denomination. Men might believe what they liked but must do as they were told.

When we apply to Asoka's policy the word tolera-

tion with its modern connotation and justly applaud the liberality of his sentiments, another qualification is needed, and we must remember that in his days no really diverse religions existed in India The creeds of Jesus, Zoroaster, and Muhammad were unknown The only organized religion other than Buddhism or Jainism was Hinduism, and that complex phenomenon at all times is more accurately described as a social system than by the name of either a religion or a creed. When Asoka speaks of the toleration of other men's creeds, he is not thinking of exclusive, militant religions like Christianity and Islam, but of Hindu sects all connected by many links of common sentiment The dominant theory of rebirth, for instance, was held by nearly all Buddhism and Jainism both were originally mere sects of Hinduism—or rather schools of philosophy founded by Hindu reformers—which in course of time gathered an accretion of mythology around the original speculative nucleus, and developed into religions

Asoka, therefore, was in a position which enabled him to realize the idea that all Indian denominations were fundamentally in agreement about what he, from the practical point of view, calls 'the essence of the matter,' all of them alike aiming at self-control and purity of life, and he thus felt fully justified in doing honour in various ways to Jains and Brahmanical Hindus as well as to Buddhists While lavishing his treasure chiefly on Buddhist shrines and monasteries, he did not hesitate to spend large sums in hewing

out of hard gneiss spacious cave-dwellings for the Âjîvika naked ascetics, not even grudging the expense of polishing the interiors like a mirror, and there can be no doubt that liberal benefactions were bestowed likewise on the Jains and Brahmans Indeed, Kashmîr tradition has preserved the names of Brahmanical temples built or restored by Asoka[1]. Similar toleration, evidenced in practice by concurrent endowment of various creeds, was practised by later princes. Khâravela of Orissa, for instance used language almost identical with that of Asoka, and avowed that he did reverence to all creeds[2] In much more recent times the cases of Harsha and many other Râjâs who acted on the same principle are familiar to students of Indian History[3]

The sentiment which dictated the tolerant conduct of the old kings is still accepted, and has been expressed by a lady who has penetrated deeply below the surface of Indian character

'It is natural enough to the Hindu intellect,' she observes, 'that around each such forth shining of the divine should grow up a new religious system But each of them is only a special way of expressing the one fundamental doctrine of Mâyâ [*scil* illusion], a new mode of endearing God to man At the same time it is thought that every one, while recognizing

[1] Stein, transl *Râjatar*, Bk I, vv 101-7

[2] *Actes du vi*ème *Congres Intern d'Orientalistes*, t iii, pp 149, 177

[3] *E Hist. India*, 2nd edition, pp 167, 168, 247, 292, 319, 429 But religious persecutions occurred occasionally (ibid, pp 190, 191, 319, 410).

this perfect sympathy of various faiths for one another, should know how to choose one among them for his own, and persist in it, till by its means he has reached the point where the formulae of sects are meaningless to him . . "A man has a right to hold his own belief, but never to force it upon another" is the dictum that has made of India a perfect university of religious culture, including every stage of thought and practice'

A recent Hindu writer, following the same line of thought, lays down the rule

'Let every man, so far as in him lieth, help the reading of the scriptures, whether those of his own Church or those of another[1]'

Asoka presumably did not believe in the Vedântist doctrine of Mâyâ, which forms a bond of union between so many Hindu sects, but, nevertheless, his theory of the relation which one sect or denomination should bear to another, as expressed in Rock Edict XII and Pillar Edict VI, agrees exactly with the principles formulated by Miss Noble and Pratâpa Simha[2].

Although Asoka unquestionably was familiar with a body of sacred Buddhist literature substantially identical with a large part of the Pâli canonical scriptures, the teaching of the edicts gives the impression of being different from that of most Buddhist works We find no distinct reference to the doctrine of *karma*, or transmitted merit and demerit, nor is any allusion made to *nirvâna*, as the goal to be obtained

[1] Miss Noble, *The Web of Indian Life*, pp. 224, 281

[2] Pratâpa Simha, *Bhakta Kalpadruma* (1866), transl Grierson (*J R A S*, 1908, p. 359)

by the good man No doubt the emperor believed in *karma*, although he does not plainly say so, and very probably he may have looked forward to *nirvâna*, although he does not express the hope His precepts, as already observed, are purely practical and intended to lead men into the right way of living, not into correct philosophical positions Many passages in the edicts indicate that he believed firmly in the 'other world' or 'future life' He tells us, for instance (Rock Edict VIII), that all his exertions were directed to the end that he might discharge his debt to animate beings, make some of them happy in this world, and also enable them in the other world to gain heaven[1] Again (Rock Edict IX), making the same contrast, he warns his people that ordinary ritual may be of only temporal effect, good for this world alone, while the ritual of the Law of Piety produces endless merit (*puñyam*) in the other world The next following edict offers the same promise to those who practise the true kind of almsgiving Still more emphatic is the declaration near the close of Rock Edict XIII that only the things concerning the other world are regarded by His Majesty as bearing much fruit, and he concludes by adjuring his descendants to place all their joy in efforts which avail for both this world and the next The warning given in the Provincials' Edict to negligent officials in Kalinga is couched in the following remarkable terms —

[1] 'In this world,' literally 'here', 'in the other world,' literally 'on the other side', 'heaven,' *svarga*

'See to my commands, such and such are the instructions of His Sacred Majesty Fulfilment of these bears great fruit, non-fulfilment brings great calamity By those who fail neither heaven (*svarga*) nor the royal favour can be won Ill performance of this duty can never win my regard, whereas by fulfilling my instructions you will gain heaven and also pay your debt to me'

The inducements thus held out seem hardly consistent with the Buddhist philosophy of the books, but the reference to heavenly bliss is supported by the words of the Buddha in the *Kûtadanta Sutta* —'Then the Blessed One discoursed to Kûtadanta the Brahman in due order, that is to say, he spake to him of generosity, of right conduct, of *heaven*, of the danger, the vanity, and the defilement of lusts, of the advantages of renunciation [1]'

While Asoka took infinite pains to issue and enforce 'pious regulations,' he put his trust in the 'superior effect of meditation' as the chief agent in the promotion of 'the growth of piety among men and the more complete abstention from killing animate beings, and from sacrificial slaughter of living creatures [2]' Nor did he rely solely upon the combined effect of meditation and pious regulations for the success of his propaganda He continually extolled the merit of almsgiving, and attached much importance to practical works of benevolence, in the execution of which he set a good example Within his own dominions he provided for the comfort of man and

[1] Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p 184

[2] Pillar Edict VII, sec 9

beast by the plantation of shade-giving and fruit-bearing trees, the digging of wells, and the erection of rest-houses and watering-places at convenient intervals along the highroads He devoted special attention to elaborate arrangements for the care and healing of the sick, and for the cultivation and dissemination of medicinal herbs and roots in the territories of foreign allied sovereigns as well as within the limits of the empire Although the word hospitals does not occur in the edicts, such institutions must have been included in his arrangements, and the remarkable free hospital which the Chinese pilgrim found working at Pâtaliputra six and a half centuries later doubtless was a continuation of Asoka's foundation The curious animal hospitals which still exist at Surat and certain other cities in Western India also may be regarded as survivals of Asoka's institutions [1]

The greater part of Asoka's moral teaching is in agreement with, and may be fairly summed up in the familiar words of the Church Catechism

'To love, honour, and succour my father and mother to submit myself to all my governours, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters to hurt no body by word nor deed to be true and just in all my dealing to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me'

[1] Rock Edict II, Pillar Edict VII, Fa-hien, *Travels*, ch xxvii, *E Hist India*, 2nd ed, pp 172, 280

Although Asoka probably had no clear faith in a living, personal God, his teaching certainly attained to a level of practical morality little inferior to that of the Church of England in many respects, and superior in one point, by the inclusion of animals within the circle of neighbours to whom duty is due. Until very recent times Christian moralists and divines have been slow to recognize the obligation to treat animals with kindness, or even to abstain from inflicting wanton cruelty upon them, while Asoka brackets together the 'sparing of living creatures' and the 'kind treatment of slaves and servants' These remarks, of course, apply only to the documents as they stand The question as to how far the admirable sentiments of the edicts were acted on by either teacher or taught is incapable of solution, but there can be little doubt that on the whole Buddhism produced a valuable and permanent improvement in Indian notions of morality, and that its beneficent action was largely promoted by Asoka's official propaganda Brahmanical Hinduism always has shown a tendency either to exalt unduly the purely intellectual apprehension of transcendental propositions or to attach excessive value to the performance of ceremonies, which, as Asoka observed, 'bear little fruit,' and, consequently, to undervalue moral duty Buddhism put moral obligation in the front.

The last glimpse obtained of the historical Asoka is that afforded by the Minor Pillar Edicts, which exhibit him as the watchful guardian of the unity and discipline of the Church which he loved How, when,

or where he died we know not, and no monument exists to mark the spot where his ashes rest The Hindu Purânas assign him a reign of either thirty-six or thirty-seven years, in substantial agreement with the chronicles of Ceylon, which also give the duration of the reign as thirty-seven years By adding the interval of about four years between his accession and coronation, the total duration of the reign may be taken as either forty or forty-one years The materials available do not permit of the chronology being adjusted with more minute accuracy, but in assigning the period B C 273–242 to the reign of Asoka we cannot be far wrong The initial date is fixed within narrow limits of possible error by two independent calculations, one starting from the death of Alexander in B C 323 and the nearly contemporaneous accession of Chandragupta, the other working backwards from B C 258, the date of the death of Magas of Cyrene, who is mentioned in the thirteenth Rock Edict, published in the fourteenth 'regnal year' reckoned from Asoka's consecration or coronation Some uncertainty is introduced into the first calculation by doubts as to the exact time of Chandragupta's accession and by the discrepancy of authorities concerning the length of the reign of Bindusâra, whether twenty-five or twenty-eight years The second calculation, based upon the year B C 258, leaves very little room for doubt, and all authorities are agreed that Chandragupta reigned for twenty-four years[1] On the

[1] Rhys Davids' note in *Anc Coins and Measures of Ceylon*,

whole, I think it best to assign B C 322 for the accession of Chandragupta, 298 for that of Bindusâra, and 273 for that of Asoka, whose coronation followed in 269

Several eminent scholars have held and defended the opinion that the figures 256 at the end of Minor Rock Edict I must be interpreted as a date expressing the number of years elapsed since the death of Buddha, and in the first edition of this work that opinion was treated as probable But further examination of the problem has convinced me that M Senart and Mr F W Thomas are right in rejecting the date theory, according to which, if the death of Buddha be assumed to have taken place in 487, the edict would be dated in B C 231, at the close of Asoka's life I now accept the view that the edict in question is the earliest of the whole collection, and dates from B C 257 This divergence of opinion as to the interpretation of that document seriously affects the treatment of the life history of Asoka [1] As already observed, I reject the theory that he abdicated, and am of opinion that the connected theory of his conversion late in life is opposed to the clear testimony of the inscriptions

p 41, corrects the copyist's error which makes the *Mahâvamsa* assign thirty four years to the reign

[1] Bühler maintained the date theory to the last (*Ind Ant.*, xxii 302), and has been followed by Dr Fleet in several articles in the *J R A S*, of which the latest is in the volume for 1909, p 1 For date of death of Buddha see *E. Hist India*, 2nd ed, pp 41–4 If B C 487 be correct, the Ceylonese date 218 A B. for the consecration of Asoka also will be right (487 − 218 = 269)

Nothing of importance is known about the successors of Asoka His grandson, Dasaratha, mentioned in the Purânas, is shown to have been a real personage by his inscriptions in the Nâgârjuni Hills near Gayâ, where he dedicated caves to the use of the Âjîvikas, as his grandfather had done in the neighbouring Barabar Hills The Jain literary tradition of Western India has much to tell about a grandson named Sampiati, who is represented as having been an eminent patron of Jainism—in fact, a Jain Asoka, but these traditions are not supported by inscriptions or other independent evidence The hypothesis that the great emperor left two grandsons, of whom one succeeded him in his eastern and the other in his western dominions, is little more than a guess, but it appears to be nearly certain that in the east he was followed directly by Dasaratha The pathetic story of the blinded son Kunala, briefly related in Chapter VII of this book, is mere folk-lore, and the account in the Kashmîr chronicle of Jalauka, another son, is little more, although fortified by some prosaic details He is represented as an ardent worshipper of Siva, while his queen was devoted to the service of the Mother-goddesses, or Saktis[1] The edicts, which indicate that Asoka had many sons and grandsons, give the name of only one son, Tîvara whose mother was the second queen, the Kâruvâkî, and nothing is known about his fate[2]

[1] Stein, transl *Râjatar* Bk 1 vv 108-52

[2] Queen's Edict

The names of the successors of Asoka after Dasaratha as stated in different books vary, but the Purânas agree that the dynasty came to an end after a duration of either 133 or 137 years. Taking the accession of Chandragupta to have occurred in B C 322, the extinction of the Maurya line may be dated in B C 185 It seems plain that the later Mauryas were comparatively insignificant princes ruling a restricted territory, and that the huge empire governed for ninety years with such distinction by Chandragupta, Bindusâra, and Asoka, crumbled to pieces when the strong arm of the third sovereign dropped the sceptre The end is said to have come when Brihadratha, the last of of the Maurya dynasty, was put to death by Pushyamitra Sunga, his commander-in-chief, who usurped the throne But, although the imperial dynasty became extinct within half a century after the death of Asoka, his descendants seem to have continued to be local chieftains in Magadha for some eight centuries, because Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, tells us that shortly before his arrival, Pûrnavarman, Râjâ of Magadha, and the last descendant of Asoka, had piously restored the sacred Bodhi tree at Gayâ, which Sasânka, King of Bengal, had destroyed These events happened soon after A D 600

CHRONOLOGY OF THE MAURYA PERIOD

B. C.	Regnal year of Asoka	Event.	Remarks
327-25	—	Indian campaigns of Alexander the Great, Chandragupta in his youth met Alexander	
324		Murder of Satrap Philippos, Indian provinces placed in charge of Eudêmos and King Ambhi (Omphis) of Taxila	
323, June		Death of Alexander at Babylon	
323-22		Revolt of Indian provinces.	
322	—	**Accession of Chandragupta Maurya as king of Magadha** and emperor of India	
321		Partition of Triparadeisos, kings Ambhi and Poros in charge of the Panjab	
ca. 317		Withdrawal of Eudemos	
315		Seleukos Nikator driven out of Babylon	
312	—	Recovery of Babylon by Seleukos, Seleukidan era, 1st October	
306		Seleukos assumed title of king	
ca. 305	—	War between Seleukos and Chandragupta, cession of four satrapies west of Indus by Seleukos, mission of Megasthenes to Pataliputra	
301		Battle of Ipsos	
298		**Accession of Bindusâra Amitraghata Maurya**	
ca. 296		Mission of Deimachos	
285		Accession of Ptolemy Philadelphos, king of Egypt	
280		Death of Seleukos Nikator, accession of Antiochos Soter, his son	
278 or 277		Accession of Antigonos Gonatas king of Macedonia	

B C	Regnal year of Asoka	Event	Remarks
273	—	**Accession of Asoka-vardhana Maurya.**	
272	–	Accession of Alexander, king of Epirus	
269	1	**Consecration** (*abhisheka* = coronation) of **Asoka**	
261	9	Conquest of Kalinga by Asoka, who became a Buddhist lay disciple (*upâsaka*), accession of Antiochos Theos, king of Syria	Rock E XIII, Minor Rock E I
259	11	Asoka entered the Buddhist Order as a monk, abolished Royal Hunt, established 'pious tours,' and dispatched missionaries	Rock E II, VIII, XIII, Minor Rock E I, Pillar E VII
258	12	Death of Magas, king of Cyrene, half-brother of Ptolemy Philadelphos, (?) death of Alexander, king of Epirus	
257	13	Asoka composed Minor Rock Edict I and Rock Edicts III and IV, dedicated Barâbar Caves 1 and 2 to the Ajîvikas, and instituted quinquennial circuits	Minor Rock E I, Rock E III, IV, Minor Rock E II may be a little later Barâbar Cave dedications
256	14	Completion of Fourteen Rock Edicts, Kalinga Borderers' Edict, appointment of Censors, (?) Bhabrâ Edict	Rock E V, XIV, Borderers' E, Bhâbrâ E
255	15	(?) Kalinga Provincials' Edict, enlargement for second time of *stupa* of Konâkamana Buddha near Kapilavastu	Provincials' E, Niglîva Pillar inscription.
250	20	Dedication of Barâbar Cave No 3 to the Âjivikas	Barâbar Cave dedication
249	21	Pilgrimage to Buddhist holy places	Rummindeî and Niglîva Pillar inscriptions

B C	Regnal year of Asoka	Event.	Remarks.
248-46	22 to 24	Declaration of independence by Bactria and Parthia	
247	23	Death of Ptolemy Philadelphos, king of Egypt	
247 or 246	23 or 24	Death of Antiochos Theos, king of Syria	
243	27	Composition of Pillar Edict VI	Pillar E VI
242	28	Completion of Seven Pillar Edicts (?) death of Antigonos Gonatas, king of Macedonia	Pillar E VII
(?) 240	30	Buddhist Council at Pâtaliputra	
240-32	30 to 37	Minor Pillar Edicts	Minor Pillar E
232	37	**Death of Asoka, accession of Dasaratha, and (?) of Samprati**, dedication of Nâgârjuni Caves to the Âjîvikas	*Dîpavamśa*, *Mahâvamśa*, *Purânas*, Nâgârjuni Cave dedications
185		Murder of Brihadratha Maurya by Pushyamitra Śunga, **extinction of Maurya imperial dynasty**	

CHAPTER II

EXTENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMPIRE

THE limits of the vast empire governed successfully by Asoka for so many years can be determined with sufficient accuracy by the testimony of the Greek and Roman authors concerning the dominions of his grandfather, by the internal evidence of the edicts, and by the distribution of the monuments and inscriptions, with some aid from tradition

The Indian conquests of Alexander to the east of the Indus, which extended across the Panjâb as far as the Hyphasis or Biâs river, quickly passed, as we have seen, soon after the death of Alexander, into the hands of Chandragupta Maurya, and the four satrapies of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia, and the Paropanisadai were ceded to him by Seleukos Nikator about B C 305 The Maurya frontier was thus extended as far as the Hindû Kush Mountains, and the greater part of the countries now called Afghanistan, Balûchistan and Makrân, with the North-Western Frontier Province, became incorporated in the Indian Empire That empire included the famous strongholds of Kâbul, Zâbul[1], Kandahar, and Herat, and so possessed the

[1] Not Ghaznî (also spelt Ghaznîn and Ghazna), which was not founded until near the close of the ninth century Zâbul,

'scientific frontier' for which Anglo-Indian statesmen have long sighed in vain There is no reason to suppose that the trans-Indus provinces were lost by Bindusâra, and it is reasonable to assume that they continued under the sway of Asoka, who refers to Antiochos, King of Syria, in terms which suggest that the Syrian and Indian empires were conterminous Costly buildings ascribed to Asoka were seen by Hiuen Tsang in different parts of Afghanistan. Among others he mentions a stone *stûpa*, a hundred feet high, at the town of Kapisa, somewhere in Kâfiristân, and a remarkable building of the same kind, three hundred feet in height and richly decorated, at Nangrahâr, near Jalâlâbâd, on the Kâbul river The Swât valley also contained evidences of Asoka's passion for building [1]

Abundant testimony proves the inclusion of the vale of Kashmîr within the limits of the empire The city which preceded the existing town of Srînagar or Pravarapura as the seat of government was founded by Asoka, and is generally believed to be represented by the ancient site called Pândrethan, two or three miles to the south-east of the present capital But the Muhammadan chroniclers locate Asoka's city at

the ancient capital of Arachosia, stood on or near the Mihtar-i Sulimân range to the east of Ghazni and the south of Kâbul The ruins, although known to exist, have not been visited by any European (Raverty, *Notes on Afghanistan*, pp 457, 506–10)

[1] Beal, *Buddhist Records*, i 57, 92, 125, Watters *On Yuan Chwang*, i 129, 183, 237 For the name Nangrahâr or Nangnahâr see Raverty, *Notes on Afghanistan*, p 49.

Sîr on the Lidar river, not far from Islâmâbâd and Mârtânda and more than thirty miles distant from Srînagar Legend credited Asoka with having built five hundred Buddhist monasteries in Kashmîr, and it is certain that his zeal was responsible for many important edifices, including some dedicated to the Brahmanical faith[1]

The inclusion in the empire of the Nepalese Tarâi, or lowlands, is proved conclusively by the inscriptions on the Rummindeî and Niglîva pillars which commemorate the pilgrimage of the sovereign to the Buddhist holy places in B. C 249

Genuine local tradition—not mere literary legend—confirmed by the existence of well-preserved monuments, attests Asoka's effective possession of the secluded valley of Nepâl The pilgrimage under the guidance of Upagupta, described in the last chapter, or another of the same kind, was continued, through either the Churiâ Ghâtî or the Goramasân Pass, into the valley, the capital of which, then known by the name of Manju Pâtan, occupied the same site as the modern city of Kâthmându Asoka resolved to commemorate his visit by the foundation of a city and the erection of massive monuments. The site selected for the new capital was some rising ground about two miles to the south-east of Kâthmându, and there the city now known as Lalita Pâtan or Pâtan was laid out Exactly in its centre Asoka erected a

[1] Stein, transl *Râjatar*, Bk I vv 101–7 and notes

temple which still stands near the southern side of the palace or 'Darbar,' and at each of the four sides of the city, facing the cardinal points, he built four great hemispherical *stûpas*, which likewise remain to this day Certain minor structures at Pâtan also bear his name Asoka was accompanied in his pilgrimage by his daughter Châ rumatî, the wife of a Kshatriya named Devapâla Both husband and wife settled in Nepâl near the holy shrine of Pasupati, where they founded and peopled Deva Pâtan They were there blessed with a numerous family, and becoming aged determined to pass the remainder of their lives in religious retirement, vowing that each would build a retreat for members of the Order Chârumatî had the good fortune to fulfil her vow, and in due course died in the nunnery which she had erected The building still exists at the village of Chabâhil, north of and close to Deva Pâtan Devapâla is said to have died in great distress because he was unable to complete before his death the monastery which he had vowed to found These things are believed to have happened while the Kirâtas, or hill-men from the east, ruled Nepâl and Sthunko was the local Râjâ[1]

In Asoka's days, and for many centuries later, Tâmralipti, the capital of a small dependent kingdom

[1] Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepâl*, ii 246-8, Wright, *History of Nepâl*, p 110, Sylvain Levi, *Le Nepâl*, i 67, ii 82. The photograph on p 263 of tome i is a good representation of the southern Asoka *stûpa* at Pâtan, the antiquity of which is guaranteed by its form See also *Ind Ant*, xiii 412

named Suhmâ, was the principal port for the embarkation and landing of passengers and goods conveyed to or from Ceylon, Burma, China, and the islands of the Indian Ocean There is no doubt that this important mart was under the jurisdiction of Asoka, who built a *stûpa* there, which was still in existence nine centuries later. The port was destroyed long since by the accumulation of silt and the sinking of the land. Its modern representative, the small town of Tamlûk, stands fully sixty miles distant from the sea The old city lies buried under the deposits made by the rivers, the remains of masonry walls and houses being met with at a depth of from eighteen to twenty-one feet[1] Another *stûpa* of Asoka stood in the capital of Samatata or the Gangetic Delta[2], and others in various parts of Bengal[3] and Bihâr.

It is thus manifest that the whole of Bengal must have been subject to the Maurya suzerainty The conquest in B C 261 of the neighbouring kingdom of Kalinga between the Mahânadî and Godâvarî rivers, narrated in the preceding chapter, completed the circle of Asoka's sovereignty over India to the north of the

[1] Tamlûk is in the Midnapore District on the Rûpnarâyan river in lat 22° 18′ N, long 87° 56′ E See *Imp Gaz.* (1908), *s v.* Tamlûk, Fa-hien, *Travels*, transl Legge, ch xxxvii, p. 100, Hiuen Tsang, in Beal, *Records*, ii. 200, Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, ii. 190. In Fa-hien's time (A D 410) there were twenty-two Buddhist monasteries at Tâmraliptı, which were reduced to about half the number in the seventh century

[2] Beal, ii 199, Watters, ii. 187

[3] Beal, ii. 195; Watters, ii. 184.

Narbadâ We do not know for certain in whose reign the southern provinces were annexed, but it is probable that they were incorporated in the empire during the reign of Chandragupta, who is known from the Girnâr inscription of Rudradâman to have been master of Surâshtra, the peninsula of Kathiâwâr, in the far west[1]

The approximate southern boundary of the empire is easily defined by the existence of three copies of the Minor Rock Edicts in Northern Mysore (N lat 14° 50′, E long 76° 48′)[2] and by the references in the Fourteen Rock Edicts to the Tamil states as independent powers The frontier line may be drawn with practical accuracy from Nellore (14° 27′ N) on the east coast at the mouth of the Pennâr or Penner river to the mouth of the Kalyânapuri river (13° 15′ N) on the west coast That river formed the northern boundary of the Tuluva country, which was separated from Kerala or Malabar by the Chandragiri or Kangarote river (12° 27′ N), and probably represents the Satiyaputra kingdom mentioned in the edicts, but not known from other sources[3]

Asoka's empire, therefore, comprised the countries now known as Afghanistan as far as the Hindû Kush,

[1] *Ep Ind*, viii 36

[2] This is the position of the Jaṭinga-Râmeśvara hill The Siddâpura and Brahmagiri recensions are close by

[3] Balfour, *Cyclopaedia*, s v Tuluva and Malabar, *E Hist India*, 2nd ed, pp 173, 402, 414, *Ind Ant* xxxiv 248, *Imp Gaz* (1908), s v Chandragiri The Chandragiri river still is an ethnic frontier which no Nâyar woman may cross.

Baluchistan, Makrân, Sind, Kachh (Cutch), the Swât valley, with the adjoining regions, Kashmîr, Nepâl, and the whole of India proper, except the extreme south, Tamilakam or Tamil Land. His dominions were far more extensive than British India of to-day, excluding Burma. The kingdom of Kâmarûpa, or Assam, in the north-east, seems to have been independent, and certainly remained outside the sphere of Asoka's religious propaganda. Hiuen Tsang, who visited the country in the seventh century, expressly affirms that Buddhism had failed to obtain a footing, and that not a single monastery had ever been built within its limits

The legends of Tibet, recorded in more forms than one, assert that the city and kingdom of Khotan, to the north of the Himalayan range, were founded during the reign of Asoka by the co-operation of Indians and Chinese who divided the country between them, and one form of the story distinctly states that 'all the lands above the river Shal-chhu Gong-ma were given to Yaksha which thenceforth belonged to Âryâvarta [*scil* India]' It is also alleged that 'Asoka, the King of Âryâvarta,' visited Khotan in the year 250 after the death of Buddha, and that he was the contemporary of Shi-hwang-ti, the famous Chinese emperor who built the Great Wall The chronology certainly is approximately correct, because Shi-hwang-ti reigned from 246 to 210, becoming 'universal emperor' in 221 [1], and Asoka's reign, as we have seen, extended from 273 to 232. The date of the alleged

[1] Tchang, *Synchronismes Chinois* (Chang-hai, 1905), pp 112–16

visit would fall in B C. 237, on the assumption, for which strong grounds exist, that Buddha died in B C 487 It is very remarkable that the Tibetan books alone have preserved a substantially accurate tradition of the dates of both Asoka and the death of Buddha But, while duly noting that fact and admitting the probability of extensive intercourse between Asoka's dominions and Khotan, the evidence is not sufficient to justify the belief that the trans-Himalayan kingdom was subject to the political authority of the Indian monarch [1] It is admitted that Buddhism was not introduced into Khotan until a date considerably later Asoka's propaganda in the Himalayan region seems to have been confined to the southern side of the main range

The materials available for a description of the organization and administration of the enormous empire defined in the preceding pages are surprisingly copious Megasthenes has recorded with the pen of an intelligent foreign observer a detailed account of the institutions of Chandragupta, and the assumption is justified that the system of government developed by the genius of the first emperor of India was maintained as a whole by his grandson, although

[1] Sarat Chandra Das, *J A S B*, Part 1 (1896), pp 195–7, Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, pp 233–7 The works used by Rockhill place the foundation of Khotan in 234 A B [487 – 234 = B C 253], and the accession of Asoka apparently 48 or 49 (30th year + 19, age of Kustana) years earlier, in B C 301 or 302, assigning fifty four years to his reign The legends are discussed by Stein *Ancient Khotan* (1907), pp 156–66

supplemented by some novel arrangements and slightly modified by certain reforms The recently discovered and partly published treatise on the Art of Government ascribed to Kautalya, Kautilya, or Chânakya, the capable, although unscrupulous, minister of the first Maurya sovereign [1], and undoubtedly of early date, throws much welcome light on the principles of government as practised by ancient Indian kings, confirming and explaining in many respects the Greek accounts which previously stood alone Numerous particulars of the civil and ecclesiastical organization of the empire are revealed by close examination of the Asoka inscriptions, and careful comparison of all the data of various kinds enables the historian to say with truth

[1] The minister's name is given as Kauṭalya, Kauṭilya, Chânakya, or Vishnugupta Mr R Shamasastry is entitled to the credit of bringing to public notice for the first time a manuscript of the *Arthaśâstra* and an imperfect manuscript of a commentary by Bhaṭṭasvâmi on the same, which have been deposited by a pundit in the Mysore Government Oriental Library Two more MSS of the work have been lent by Professor Jolly to the Münich State Library, and another appears to exist in the collection of the Sanskrit College at Calcutta (Hillebrandt, *Ueber das Kautilīyaśâstra und Verwandtes*, Breslau, 1908) Mr Shamasastry has printed a preliminary rough edition of most of the text, proofs of which are in the hands of Mr F W Thomas and other scholars, and has published a translation of selections dealing with the subjects of land and revenue in *Ind Ant*, xxxiv (1905), pp 5, 47, 110 He has also published a rough translation of Books i and ii in the *Mysore Review*, which has been reprinted as a pamphlet at the G T A Press, Mysore, 1908, under the title *Chânakya's Arthaśâstra or Science of Politics*. The learned translator hopes to complete the work

that more is known about the internal polity of India as it was in the Maurya age than can be affirmed on the subject concerning any period intervening between that age and the reign of Akbar eighteen centuries later

Pâtaliputra, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha and the head quarters of the imperial government, stood on the northern bank of the Sôn, a few miles above the confluence of that river with the Ganges The Sôn changed its course long ago and now unites with the larger stream near the cantonment of Dinapore (Dhânapur) above Bankipore, but the old bed of the river can be readily traced and vestiges of the *ghâts* or steps which lined its bank can still be discerned The capital, thus protected by two great rivers against hostile approach, occupied a strong, defensibl position such as was much favoured by the founders of Indian towns The site is now covered by the large native city of Patna, the English civil station of Bankipore, the East Indian Railway, and sundry adjacent villages The belief at one time current that a large part of the ancient city has been cut away by the rivers is erroneous Diluvial action seems to have been slight, and the remains of the early buildings still exist, but lie buried for the most part under a deep layer of silt.

The ancient city, like its modern successor, was a long, narrow parallelogram, about nine miles in length and a mile and a half in breadth When Megasthenes lived there in the days of Chandragupta, it

was defended by a massive timber palisade, pierced by sixty-four gates, crowned by five hundred and seventy towers, and protected externally by a broad, deep moat filled from the waters of the Sôn. Fragments of the palisade have been found at several places in the course of casual excavations. Asoka improved the defences by building an outer masonry wall, and beautified the city with so many richly decorated stone buildings that they seemed to after ages to be the work of the genii and beyond the power of human skill. I have myself seen two magnificent sandstone capitals dug up, one close to the railway and the other in a potato-field, which must have belonged to stately edifices of large size Unfortunately, the depth of the overlying silt, often reaching twenty feet, and the existence of numerous modern buildings make excavation exceptionally difficult

The royal palace, or one of the palaces, seems to have occupied the site now covered by the village and fields of Kumrâhâr, to the south of the railway, and the slight excavations carried out there some years ago were sufficient to indicate the probability that more systematic exploration on a large scale would produce extremely interesting results I believe that it would be possible to identify many of the sites of the monuments at and near Pâtaliputra mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims, if a thorough survey were made by an adequate staff working with suitable appliances under skilled supervision, but the results of the praiseworthy efforts made with imperfect equipment

by more or less amateur explorers cannot be considered satisfactory or often convincing [1]. The palace of Chandragupta, although probably constructed mostly of timber like the palaces of the modern kings of Burma, is described as excelling in magnificence the royal pleasaunces of Susa and Ekbatana. The pillars, we are told, were clasped all round with vines embossed in gold, and adorned with silver figures of the most attractive birds The gardens were replete with the choicest plants and furnished with artificial ponds of great beauty Those splendours have all gone beyond recall, but extensive and costly excavation, no doubt, would disclose something of the magnitude at least of the masonry foundations of the earlier buildings and possibly might reveal more characteristic remains of Asoka's stone edifices and inscriptions

The administration of the metropolis was organized with much elaboration, and was confided to a commission of thirty members divided into six Boards of five members each—a development, perhaps, of

[1] For changes in the rivers, see Cunningham, *Archaeol S Rep*, vol viii, p 6, vol xi, p 154 Many identifications, more or less convincing, will be found in Lieut-Col Waddell's tract entitled *Discovery of the Exact Site of Asoka's Classic Capital of Pâtaliputra, &c*, Calcutta, 1892, 2nd ed, 1903 This interesting work, although open to criticism, has added much to knowledge A good deal of information is buried in an unpublished and rather crude report, of which I possess a proof, by the late Bâbû P C Mukharjî, whose drawings must be in the Calcutta Secretariat The Greek and Roman notices will be found in Mr McCrindle's works already cited

the ordinary Hindu *panchâyat.* The first Board was charged with the superintendence of the industrial arts, and of artisans, who were regarded as servants of the State The second was entrusted with the duty of supervising foreigners, and attending to their wants, being responsible for medical aid to the strangers in case of sickness, for their decent burial in case of death, and for the administration of the estates of the deceased The officials were also required to provide foreign visitors with suitable lodgings and to furnish them with adequate escort when returning home The duties of this Board closely resembled those imposed upon the *proxenoi* of Greek cities, but in India the persons performing such duties were officials of the Indian king, whereas in Greece the *proxenos*, like a modern consul, was appointed by the state whose subjects he protected [1]

The third Board was charged with the duty of maintaining a register of births and deaths, which was kept up for the information of the Government as well as for revenue purposes

The fourth Board may be called the Board of Trade, because it exercised a general superintendence over the trade and commerce of the capital, and regulated weights and measures The tax on sales being one of the principal sources of the royal revenue, everything for sale had to be marked with

[1] 'Consular Officers in India and Greece,' *Ind Ant*, xxxiv (1905), p 200, Newton, *Essays on Art and Archaeology*, pp 104, 121

the official stamp[1] The rules about weights and measures were laid down in minute detail. The fifth Board had similar duties in respect of manufactured goods Traders were required to keep old and new goods separate, and careful distinctions were drawn between merchandise from foreign parts, that from the country, and that produced or made inside the city The sixth Board collected the tax on sales, which is said by Megasthenes to have been one-tenth *ad valorem*, but, as a matter of fact, was levied at various rates Evasion of this tax was punishable with death, according to Megasthenes as reported by Strabo Chânakya lays down that 'those who utter a lie shall be punished as thieves[2],' that is to say, by mutilation or death

The documents do not supply similar details concerning the municipal government of the other cities of the empire, but the edicts refer more than once to the officers in charge of particular towns, and it is probable that the greater cities were administered on the same lines as the capital

The court was characterized by semi-barbaric magnificence which Quintus Curtius considered to be carried to 'a vicious excess without a parallel in the world' The stories about the king's golden palanquin and other articles of ostentatious luxury

[1] *ἀπὸ συσσήμου* in Megasthenes, Fragm xxxiv, mistranslated by McCrindle (*Megasthenes*, p 87) as 'by public notice' *Σύσσημον* is the *abhijñânamudrâ* of Châṇakya, Bk ii, ch 21

[2] *Arthaśâstra*, Bk ii, ch 21, 22

may be accepted as true, because such extravagances have always been a weakness of Indian Râjâs, and it would not be difficult to find parallels even in Europe. The Roman author was especially scandalized by the information that the sovereign used to be 'accompanied by a long train of courtesans carried in golden palanquins, which takes a place in the procession separate from that of the queen's retinue, and is as sumptuously appointed' The statement quoted is supported by Chânakya, who speaks of such women 'holding the royal umbrella, golden pitcher, and fan, and attending upon the king when seated on his royal litter, throne, or chariot[1]' Everybody acquainted with modern India is aware that similar customs still survive

The close attendance of female guards, not of the courtesan class, on the royal person is an extremely ancient Indian custom, which was observed by Ranjit Singh less than a century ago, and may, perhaps, still be practised in out-of-the-way States. Chânakya lays down the rule that the sovereign on getting up from bed in the morning should be received first by the female archers, whose appearance seems to have been considered of good omen[2] These Amazonian guards attended the king when he went out hunting in state, and prevented intrusion on the road of the procession, which was marked out by ropes Death was the penalty of him who passed the barrier. Asoka, like his ancestors, indulged

[1] Bk ii ch 27 [2] Bk i ch 21

without scruple in such formal hunting expeditions during his earlier years, but when he began to 'exert himself strenuously' in the cause of the Law of Piety about B C 259, he suppressed the establishment of the Royal Hunt and substituted for the pleasures of the chase the less exciting exercises of interviewing holy men, giving alms, and holding disputations on religious subjects during 'pious tours' similar to the pilgrimage which he undertook in B C 249

Before the introduction of Buddhist puritanism the Maurya court used to amuse itself, not only with hunting, but with racing, animal fights, and gladiatorial contests A curious form of racing not now in vogue, was practised with a special breed of oxen, which are said to have equalled horses in speed The car was harnessed to a mixed team with horses in the centre and an ox on each side The course was about a mile and three quarters in length, and the king and his nobles betted keenly in gold and silver on the result Animal fights were much enjoyed, elephants, rhinoceroses, bulls, rams, and other beasts being pitted against one another Elephant fights continued to be a favourite diversion at Muhammadan courts up to recent times, and the unpleasant spectacle of a ram fight may still be witnessed at the palaces of many Râjâs Such entertainments, of course, are abhorrent to the spirit of Buddhism, and all came to an end when Asoka resolved that there should be no more 'cakes and ale [1]' His courtiers must have had

[1] For the Maurya court see Q Curtius, *History of Alexander*

a terribly dull time and often have sighed for the good old days of worldly-minded Chandragupta.

Communication between the capital and the provinces was maintained by the river waterways and a system of roads, the principal of which was the royal highway leading from Pâtaliputra to the Indus through Taxila, the forerunner of Lord Dalhousie's Grand Trunk Road. Distances were marked by pillars erected at intervals of ten *stadia*, or half a *kôs*, about an English mile and a quarter. Asoka added a well beside each pillar, and further consulted the comfort of travellers by planting trees for shade and fruit, and by providing rest-houses and sheds supplied with drinking-water. The communications must have been good to make possible the control of the whole empire from a capital situated so far to the east as Pâtaliputra.[1]

the Great, Bk viii, ch. 9, transl. McCrindle (*Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 188), and Aelian, *On the Peculiarities of Animals*, Bk xiii, ch. 18, 22, Bk xv, ch. 15, transl. McCrindle, (*Ancient India*, pp. 141-5). Trotting oxen are used largely to this day, especially in Western and Southern India, but I have never heard of the racing breed except in the pages of Megasthenes. I fully believe his statement.

[1] Strabo (Bk xv, ch. 11, McCrindle, *Anc. India*, p. 16) gives the length of the royal road as 10,000 *stadia*, or about 1150 English miles, on the authority of Megasthenes and Eratosthenes, who obtained the figures from an official record, and as 9,000 according to another authority. 1 *stadium* = 202¼ yards, 10 *stadia* = 2022½ yards. The mean length of the Mughal *kôs* as measured between the existing pillars (*mînârs*) is 4558 yards, but a shorter *kôs* is used in the Panjâb. I do not think it possible to accept the proposed interpretation of *adhakosikya* in

The imperial government was an absolute autocracy in which the king's will was supreme. From about B C 259 Asoka applied his autocratic power to the Buddhist Church, which he ruled as its Head. In the Bhâbrâ Edict 'His Grace the King of Magadha addresses the Church with greetings and bids its members prosperity and good health,' and after this exordium proceeds to recommend to the faithful, lay and clerical, the passages from the holy books which he desires them to study with special care. Many years later, in the Sârnâth Edict and its variants, we find His Sacred Majesty declaring that 'the Church may not be rent in twain by any person,' and prescribing the canonical penalties to be inflicted upon schismatics Asoka's position finds a close parallel in that of Charlemagne, whose 'unwearied and comprehensive activity made him throughout his reign an ecclesiastical no less than a civil ruler, summoning and sitting in councils, examining and appointing bishops, settling by capitularies the smallest points of Church discipline and polity[1]'

The imperial orders, whether in purely civil or in ecclesiastical matters, between which nice distinctions were not drawn, were communicated through an organized body of officials, the superior grades of

Pillar Edict VII, sec 5, as meaning 'at intervals of eight *kôs*' *Adha* in the language of the edicts does not apparently mean 'eight' The direct distance between Pâṭaliputra and Taxila as measured on the map is about 950 miles.

[1] Freeman, *The Holy Roman Empire* (1892), p. 64.

whom were called *mahâmâtras*, and the lower ranks were known as *yuktas*[1]. When a *mahâmâtra* or *yukta* was assigned to a special department, his sphere of duty was indicated by a prefix to the generic title. The less civilized tribes on the frontiers and in the jungles were governed by their own chiefs subject to the general control of the paramount power, and we may be assured that large portions of the empire were administered by local hereditary Râjâs, who would have been left very much to their own devices as long as they supplied the men and money demanded by their suzerain. But the inscriptions, with one exception, do not mention such Râjâs in the settled provinces, and the view concerning them expressed above is based on the general course of Indian history[2].

The authorities, that is to say, Megasthenes, Chânakya, and the edicts, rather seem to imply that all the work of administration was done by Crown officials. The princely Viceroys stood at the head of the bureaucracy. Four of them—the Princes of Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali, and Suvarnagiri—are mentioned in the edicts[3], and there may have been others. The Viceroyalties of Taxila and Ujjain are known also from

[1] The word *yukta* in this sense occurs several times in the edicts, and frequently in the *Arthaśâstra*.

[2] The Yavana Râjâ Tushâspha in the Girnâr inscription of Rudradâman (*Ep. Ind.*, viii. 36).

[3] Taxila and Ujjain in Kalinga Provincials' Edict; Tosali in Kalinga Borderers' Edict, Dhauli version; Suvarnagiri in Minor Rock Edict I, Brahmagiri version.

literary tradition, which represents Asoka as having governed both those distant provinces previous to his accession The Prince of Taxila may be presumed to have controlled at least the Panjâb and Kashmîr The country now called Afghanistan may have been in charge of another Viceroy, who does not happen to have been mentioned The Prince of Ujjain would have been responsible for Mâlva, Gujarât, and Surâshtra The Prince of Tosali presumably was Governor of the annexed province of Kalinga, and the Prince of Suvarnagiri seems to have been Viceroy of the South [1]

The more central regions of the empire apparently were administered by officials appointed directly from the capital, without the intervention of any Prince The distribution of the Pillar inscriptions gives a rough indication of the extent of the home provinces, while the Rock inscriptions occur only in outlying regions

The Râjûkas 'set over hundreds of thousands of souls,' probably came next in rank to the Viceroys. The modern term Commissioner may serve as a rough equivalent Below them came the Prâdesikas, or District Officers, and both classes seem to have been

[1] Tosali must have been near Dhauli in the Puri District, Orissa, and, perhaps, was the Dosara of Ptolemy. The position of Suvarnagiri is not known There is a Songîr in W Khândesh District, 21° 5′ N, 74° 47′ E, with an old fort, and a Songarh, the early Gaikwâr capital, with 'vast ruins,' in Baroda, 21° 10′ N, 73° 36′ E Dr Fleet's identification with the Songiri hill at Râjagriha depends on his theory of Asoka's late conversion and subsequent abdication

comprised under the general name of *mahâmâtras*. A host of petty officials, *yuktas* and *upayuktas*, clerks and underlings of sorts, carried out the orders of their superiors. The king and his great officers, of course, had their secretariat establishments, worked by secretaries, or *lekhakas*[1]. All the evidence goes to show that the civil administration was highly organized for purposes of both record and executive action

Departments were numerous Megasthenes was impressed by the working of the Irrigation Department, which performed functions similar to those of the corresponding institution in Egypt, regulating the sluices so as to distribute the water fairly among the farmers The Rudradâman inscription at Girnâr gives us a glimpse of the actual working of the Department, which had embanked the lake at Girnâr in the time of Chandragupta Maurya, and under Asoka's Persian (Yavana) Râjâ, Tushâspha, had equipped it with the needful watercourses. This instance shows the care that was taken to promote agricultural improvement and so to develop the land revenue, even in a remote province distant more than a thousand miles from the capital The farmers did not get the water for nothing It was supplied on strictly business principles, and paid for by heavy water rates (*udakabhâgam*) varying from one-fourth to one-third of the produce, according to the mode of irrigation[2].

The land revenue, or Crown rent, as always in India,

[1] Defined in *Arthaśâstra*, Bk ii, ch. 10

[2] *Arthaśâstra*, Bk ii, ch 24

was the mainstay of the Treasury. All agricultural land was regarded as Crown property, and the normal theoretical share of the State was either one-fourth or one-sixth of the produce, in addition to water rate, if any, and a host of other dues and cesses. People who grumble at modern assessments will find if they study history that their ancestors often were much more severely fleeced Chânakya, without the slightest regard for moral principles, explains the methods of more than Machiavellian wickedness by which needy kings may replenish their coffers [1], and many instances of the lesson being well learned are on record. Official misdoings were as common in ancient as in modern times The textbook writer, with the characteristic Hindu love for categories, explains that 'there are about forty ways of embezzlement,' which he enumerates with painstaking exactness He sagely observes that 'just as it is impossible not to taste the honey or the poison that finds itself at the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a Government servant not to eat up at least a bit of the king's revenue [2].' The Kalinga Provincials' Edict shows how Asoka was worried by negligent or disobedient officers, and expresses in singularly vivid language, evidently the actual words of the sovereign, his displeasure at the neglect of his commands 'You must,' he declares, 'see to your duty and be told to remember :—"See to my commands, such and such are the instructions of his Sacred

[1] *Ind Ant*, xxxiv 115-19.

[2] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk ii, ch. 8, 9

Majesty." Fulfilment of these bears great fruit; non-fulfilment brings great calamity. By those who fail neither heaven nor the royal favour can be won;' and so forth.

He essayed the impossible task of supervising personally the affairs of his wide dominions. 'I am never fully satisfied,' he exclaims, 'with my efforts and my dispatch of business. Work I must for the welfare of all—and the root of the matter is in effort and the dispatch of business, for nothing is more efficacious to secure the welfare of all.' Thus he toiled through a long life, priding himself especially on his accessibility to suitors at all hours and in all places, even the most inconvenient[1] Such accessibility, although inconsistent with really efficient government, is always highly popular in India, where the people never can be persuaded that a ruler may arrange his time more profitably than by exposing himself to incessant interruption The European critic feels that if Asoka had worked less hard he would have done better work, but must admit that in spite of his defects of method he was wonderfully successful in holding together for forty years an empire rarely exceeded in magnitude. Asoka's procedure was in accordance with the practice of his grandfather, who heard cases even while he was being massaged by his attendants, and with Chânakya's rule, which reads like an extract from the edicts:

'The King, therefore, shall personally attend to the business

[1] Rock Edict VI

of gods, heretics, Brahmans learned in the Vedas, cattle, sacred places, minors, the aged, the afflicted, the helpless, and women:—all this either in the order of enumeration or according to the urgent necessity of each such business.[1]'

The emperor, like most Oriental sovereigns, relied much upon espionage and the reports of news-writers and special agents employed by the Crown for the purpose of watching the executive officers, and reporting to head quarters everything that came to their knowledge. Even the courtesans were employed in this secret service, the nature of which is largely explained in Chânakya's treatise. Kings in those days had reason to be suspicious. It is recorded of Chandragupta that he dared not sleep in the daytime, and was obliged, like a modern king of Burma, to change his bedroom every night.[2]

Asoka, in his fourteenth 'regnal year' (B.C. 256), added to the normal establishment a body of officers especially appointed to the duty of teaching and enforcing the Buddhist Law of Piety, or rules of *dharma*. The superior officials of this kind were termed *Dharma-mahâmâtras*, which may be rendered

[1] *Arthaśâstra* Bk. 1, ch. 19, 'The Duties of a King.'

[2] Strabo, I, 53, 56 in McCrindle, *Megasthenes*, p. 71; *Arthaśâstra* Bk. 1, ch. 11, &c.; the King's Agents (*pulisâni*) in Pillar Edict III with whom compare the *missi dominici* of Charlemagne; *Mudra rakshasa*, Act ii. Charlemagne's *missi* were 'officials commissioned to traverse each some part of his dominions, reporting on and redressing the evils they found' (Freeman, *Holy Roman Empire* (1892), p. 68). Their functions must have been similar to those of Asoka's 'men' or Agents.

Censors, and the inferior were called *Dharma-yuktas* or Assistant Censors The duties of the Censors, as defined in general terms in Rock Edicts V, XII, and Pillar Edict VII, must have included jurisdiction in cases of injury inflicted on animals contrary to the regulations, exhibitions of gross filial disrespect, and other breaches of the moral rules prescribed by authority They were also instructed to redress cases of wrongful confinement or corporal punishment, and were empowered to grant remission of sentence when the offender was entitled to consideration by reason of advanced years, sudden calamity, or the burden of a large family They shared with the Inspectors of Women the delicate duty of supervising female morals, the households of the royal family both at the capital and in the provincial towns being subject to their inspection The practical working of these institutions must have presented many difficulties, and been open to much abuse

The general severity of the government of Chandragupta is testified to by Justin, who declares that that prince, after his victory over the Macedonian garrisons, 'forfeited by his tyranny all title to the name of liberator, for he oppressed with servitude the very people whom he had emancipated from foreign thraldom ' The Roman historian's impression seems to be justified by the few details on record concerning the ferocity of the penal law We have seen that evasion of taxes in certain cases was punishable with death, and that an intruder on the king's procession during a hunting expedition was

liable to the same punishment We are also told that the offence of causing the loss of a hand or an eye to an artisan was capital, the reason apparently being that skilled workmen were regarded as being specially devoted to the king's service Perjury and theft were ordinarily punishable by mutilation. Other instances of severity may be collected from Chânakya's treatise In certain unspecified cases the eccentric penalty of shaving the offender's hair was inflicted. This punishment apparently was borrowed from Persia, and is one of several indications that the example of the court of the Great King influenced the customs of the Maurya sovereigns[1] Asoka, as already observed, seems to have maintained the stern methods of his predecessors, the only mitigation for which he claims credit being the grant of three days' respite between a capital sentence and execution His practice of releasing convicts on the anniversary of his consecration was in accordance with precedent[2]. Megasthenes, from personal experience, was able to testify that the sternness of the government kept crime in check, and that in Chandragupta's capital, with a population of 400,000, the total of the thefts reported in any one day did not exceed two hundred *drachmai*, or about eight pounds sterling

The two Kalinga Edicts deserve special study as authoritative statements of Asoka's personal ideal of good government, a benevolent paternal despotism.

[1] *Ind Ant* xxxiv (1905), p 202

[2] *Arthaśâstra*, Bk ii, ch 36 (*Ind Ant.*, xxxiv. 52)

He instructs his officers that they must induce the wilder tribes 'to trust me and grasp the truth that—"the King is to us even as a father; he loves us even as he loves himself; we are to the King even as his children."' The companion edict inculcates similar principles to be applied to the government of the more settled population

The army, comprising, according to established rule, the four arms of infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariots, was not a militia, but a permanent force, maintained at the royal cost, liberally paid, and equipped from the Government arsenals The edicts, as might be expected, throw no light upon its organization in the reign of Asoka, and the information on record chiefly derived from Megasthenes, refers to the time of Chandragupta The navy, as in Europe until recent times, was regarded as a branch of the army. No evidence as to the extent of the naval force maintained by the Mauryas is available, but it is known that the ancient Hindus did not shun the 'black water' as their descendants do, and that the States of Southern India maintained powerful navies for centuries It is, therefore, probable that the Maurya ships were not restricted to the rivers, but ventured out to sea Chânakya, indeed, expressly states that the head of the naval department should look after sea-going ships as well as those concerned with inland navigation [1]

The War Office, like the capital, was controlled by

[1] *Samudra-samyâna*, *Arthaśâstra*, Bk. ii, ch 28

a commission of thirty members, divided into six Boards each containing five members, to which departments were assigned as follows —

Board I Admiralty, in co-operation with the Admiral ,

Board II Transport, commissariat, and army service, including the provision of drummers, grooms, mechanics, and grass-cutters ,

Board III Infantry

Board IV Cavalry ,

Board V War-chariots

Board VI Elephants

The strength of the force maintained by Chandragupta has been stated in Chapter I Asoka's peaceful policy probably required a smaller military establishment, but nothing on the subject is recorded The heaviness of the enemy's casualties in the Kalinga war indicates that Asoka must have employed a large force to reduce the country

The arms, when not in use, were stored in arsenals, and ranges of stables were provided for the horses and elephants. Chariots, when on the march, were drawn by oxen in order to spare the horses Each war-chariot, which had a team of either two or four horses harnessed abreast, carried two fighting-men, besides the driver The chariot when used as a state conveyance was drawn by four horses 'The victory of kings,' it was said, 'depends mainly upon elephants [1],'

[1] *Arthaśâstra*, Bk ii, ch 2 The author lays down that 'whoever kills an elephant shall be put to death '

which, consequently, were kept in vast hosts, numbering many thousands. Each war-elephant carried three fighting-men in addition to the driver

The interesting details given by Arrian concerning the equipment of the infantry and cavalry may be quoted in full —

'I proceed now,' he says, 'to describe the mode in which the Indians equip themselves for war, premising that it is not to be regarded as the only one in vogue The foot-soldiers carry a bow of equal length with the man who bears it This they rest upon the ground, and pressing against it with their left foot thus discharge the arrow, having drawn the string far backwards, for the shaft they use is little short of being three yards long, and there is nothing which can resist an Indian archer's shot—neither shield nor breastplate, nor any stronger defence if such there be In their left hand they carry bucklers of undressed ox-hide, which are not so broad as those who carry them, but are about as long Some are equipped with javelins instead of bows, but all wear a sword, which is broad in the blade, but not longer than three cubits, and this, when they engage in close fight (which they do with reluctance), they wield with both hands, to fetch down a lustier blow

The horsemen are equipped with two lances like the lances called *saunia*, and with a shorter buckler than that carried by the foot-soldiers But they do not put saddles on their horses, nor do they curb them with bits like the bits in use among the Greeks or Kelts, but they fit on round the extremity of the horse's mouth a circular piece of stitched raw ox-hide studded with pricks of iron or brass pointing inwards, but not very sharp, if a man is rich he uses pricks made of ivory Within the horse's mouth is put an iron prong like a skewer, to which the reins are attached. When the rider,

then, pulls the reins, the prong controls the horse, and the pricks which are attached to this prong goad the mouth, so that it cannot but obey the reins[1]'

The development during the ninety years of Maurya rule of a system of civil, military, and church government so complex and highly organized is matter for legitimate astonishment The records of Alexander's invasion disclose the existence of a multitude of independent states governed either by Râjâs or tribal oligarchies, constantly at war with one another and free from all control by a superior power It is true that, even in those days, Magadha occupied the premier position, but the Nanda king of that state made no claim to be the Lord Paramount of India The conception of an Indian Empire, extending from sea to sea and embracing almost the whole of India and Afghanistan, was formed and carried into effect by Chandragupta and his minister in the brief space of twenty-four years History can show few greater political achievements Not only was the empire formed, but it was so thoroughly organized that the

[1] Arrian, *Indika*, ch xvi, transl McCrindle (*Megasthenes*, p 220) A nearly life sized figure of an infantry soldier armed as described by Megasthenes is reproduced by Cunningham, *Stupa of Bharhut*, Pl xxxii, 1 For shapes of Indian arms at the beginning of the Christian era, see Cunningham, *Bhilsa Topes*, p 217 Pl xxxiii, Maisey, *Sânchi*, Pl xxxv, xxxvi. A long list of weapons and military engines is given in *Arthaśâstra*, Bk. ii, ch 18. Tennent (*Ceylon*, 3rd ed , p 499) compares the Veddah mode of holding the bow with the foot, but it is quite different, the bow not being rested on the ground

sovereign's commands emanating from Pâtaliputra were obeyed without demur on the banks of the Indus and the shores of the Arabian sea. The immense heritage thus created by the genius of the first emperor of India was transmitted intact to his son and grandson, and all three monarchs were in a position to assert their equality with the leading Hellenistic princes of the age. The figure of Bindusâra, hidden in the darkness, eludes our view, and we can only assume that his capacity must have been equal to the task imposed upon him by his birth, because otherwise it would have been impossible for him to pass on to his famous son the splendid dominion which Asoka ruled with so much distinction

Dim though the picture be in many of its details, the figure of Asoka takes an honourable place in the gallery of the greatest kings known to history. In a sense we know him better than we know any other ancient monarch, because he speaks to us in his own words It is impossible, I think, for any student to read the edicts with care, and not to hear the voice of the king himself The abrupt transitions from the third to the first person, from *oratio obliqua* to *oratio directa,* which embarrass the translator, and produced on early interpreters the erroneous impression of clumsy composition, are of the deepest interest when regarded as devices for inserting in official proclamations the very words of the sovereign. We can discern a man of strong will,

unwearied application, and high aims, who spared no labour in the pursuit of his ideals, possessed the mental grasp capable of forming the vast conception of missionary enterprise in three continents, and was at the same time able to control the intricate affairs of Church and State in an empire which the most powerful sovereign might envy His plan of committing to the faithful keeping of the rocks his code of moral duty was equally original and bold, and his intense desire that his measures should result in the 'long endurance' of the Good Law as taught in his ordinances has been fulfilled in no small measure by the preservation of some thirty-five separate documents to this day

His government—a theocracy without a God—concerned itself, like that of Charlemagne, equally with Church and State, and, so far as we can judge, attained no small success The number, costliness and magnitude of his buildings and monuments are enough in themselves to prove that the empire in which the erection of such works was possible must have been rich and tranquil

We need not be surprised that the fabric collapsed after his death, the wonder rather is that it held together so long

CHAPTER III

THE MONUMENTS

THE extravagant legend which ascribes to Asoka the erection of eighty-four thousand *stûpas*, 'topes,' or sacred cupolas, within the space of three years, proves the depth of the impression made upon the popular imagination by the number, magnitude, and magnificence of the great Maurya's architectural achievements[1] So imposing were his works that they were universally believed to have been wrought by supernatural agency

'The royal palace and halls in the midst of the city (*scil* Pâtaliputra), which exist now as of old, were all made by spirits which he employed, and which piled up the stones, reared the walls and gates, and executed the elegant carving and inlaid sculpture-work in a way which no human hands of this world could accomplish[2]'

[1] 84,000 *dharmarâjikâs* built by Asoka Dharmaraja, as stated by *Divyâvadâna* (ed Cowell & Neil, p 379, quoted by Foucher, *Icon Bouddhique*, p 55 n) In the MS miniature the words *Râdhya-Dharmarâjikâ-chaityah* denote the *stûpa* and one story monastery beside the Râdhya Pillar (ibid, p 195)

[2] Fa-hien, *Travels*, ch xxvii, transl Legge Giles's version differs somewhat —'The king's palace and courts were all con structed by spirits whom he employed to pile stones, build walls and gates, carve ornamental designs and engrave—truly

Thus wrote the simple-minded Fa-hien at the beginning of the fifth century More than two hundred years later, when Hiuen Tsang travelled, the ancient imperial city was deserted and in ruins, the effect of the departure of the court and the ravages of the White Huns Now,

'The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples,'

lie buried deep below the silt of the Sôn and Ganges rivers, serving as a foundation for the city of Patna, the civil station of Bankipore, sundry villages, and the East Indian Railway

No example of the secular architecture of Asoka's reign has survived in a condition such as would permit of its plan and style being studied Local tradition indicates the extensive buried ruins at and near the village of Kumiâhâr, to the south of the railway line connecting Bankipore and Patna, as the site of the palace of the ancient kings, and the tradition probably embodies the truth Mr Mukharji discovered innumerable fragments of an Asoka pillar between the Kallu and Chaman tanks to the north of the village The pillar, which was of polished sandstone as usual, was about 3 feet in diameter, and evidently had been broken up by heaping round it a mass of inflammable material which was then set on fire The similar pillar, to the north-east of

not the work of mortals These still exist' Beal, like Legge, places the palace 'in the city,' and according to him 'the ruins still exist.'

Benares City, the stump of which is now known as Lât Bhairo, was destroyed in that way by the local Muhammadans during the great riot of 1805. Many sculptures and other remains at Kumrâhâr indicate the importance of the site But another palace must have been situated somewhere inside the city walls and a second Asoka pillar is said to exist buried in Patna City[1]. Most of the remains at and near Patna are practically inaccessible, and the desultory excavations carried out on several occasions have not sufficed to establish many results of definite value If the exploration of the site is ever taken up seriously, it will need to be done in another fashion and will be a long and costly business.

The numerous and stately monasteries which Asoka erected at many places in the empire have shared the fate of his palaces, not even one surviving in a recognizable state. Such structures were extremely numerous Hiuen Tsang mentions more than eighty *stûpas* and monasteries ascribed to Asoka, without counting the legendary five hundred convents in Kashmîr and other large indefinite groups in other countries. The Asokârâma, or Kukkutarâma, the 'Cock Monastery,' which was the first-fruits of the emperor's zeal as a convert, and accommodated a thousand

[1] At Kallu Khan's Bâgh, in the zenâna of Maulavis Muhammad Kabîr and Amîr, buried several feet below the courtyard, and so thick that two men joining their arms could not encircle it (Mukharji's unpubl *Report*, p 17). For Lât Bhairo see the author's paper in *Z D. M G* for 1909.

monks, stood on the south-eastern side of the capital, but has not been identified, which is not surprising, as it had been already long in ruins at the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit in the seventh century According to Târanâth, the great monastic establishment at Nâlanda near Râjagriha, which became the head quarters of Indian Buddhism, was founded by Asoka, who erected splendid buildings there It seems likely that excavation on the site of Nâlanda, which is well defined and easily accessible, might yield results far richer than can be hoped for at Patna. The explorations at Nâlanda up to the present time have been of the most superficial kind

The *stûpas*, or cupolas, on which the emperor lavished so much treasure, have been more fortunate than the palaces and monasteries in that one group of buildings of this class, thanks to its situation in an out-of-the-way locality, survived destruction, and would now be tolerably perfect but for the ravages of English amateur archaeologists in the early part of the nineteenth century The group alluded to is that at and near Sânchî in the Bhopâl State, Central India (lat 23° 29′ N, long 77° 45′ E), which included ten *stûpas*, besides the remains of other buildings, as late as the year 1818 [1]

A *stûpa*, it should be explained, was usually destined either to enshrine a casket containing the relics of a Buddha or other saint, or simply to mark

[1] These buildings are not mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims

permanently the reputed scene of some incident famous in the history of the Buddhist Church; but occasionally one was erected merely in honour of a Buddha. The form undoubtedly was derived from that of an earthen burial tumulus, and the older the *stûpa*, the nearer it approaches in design to its prototype In Asoka's age a *stûpa* was a nearly hemispherical mass of solid masonry, either brick or stone, resting upon a plinth which formed a perambulation path for worshippers, and flattened at the top to carry a square altar-shaped structure, which was surmounted by a series of stone umbrellas one above the other The base was frequently surrounded by a stone railing, the pillars, bars, and coping-stones of which might be either quite plain or adorned by all the resources of sculpture in relief. Sometimes the entrances through the railings were equipped with elaborate gateways (*toranas*), resembling in style those still common in China, and covered with the most elaborate carvings

The principal *stûpa* at Sânchi, which stands on the top of a hill and is a conspicuous object as seen from the Indian Midland Railway, is a segment of a sphere, built of red sandstone blocks, with a diameter of 110 feet at the base of the dome The diameter of the plinth or berm is 121½ feet, and the total height of the monument when perfect is believed to have been about 77½ feet. It is enclosed by a massive plain stone railing with monolithic pillars 11 feet high, entrance being effected through four highly ornate

gateways, 34 feet in height, covered with a profusion of relief sculptures illustrating the Buddhist scriptures Casts of the eastern gateway now at South Kensington and in several other museums can be examined conveniently at leisure. The existing *stûpa* and plain railing are believed to date from Asoka's reign, but the elaborate gateways may be about a century later The other *stûpas* in the neighbourhood, which are all more or less similar in form, have yielded some interesting relic-caskets, as mentioned in Chapter I A mutilated pillar to the south bears a fragment of an edict of Asoka, and many sculptures and inscriptions of interest have been found A broken standing statue of a saint with a halo which once surmounted the northern detached pillar near the great *stûpa* was considered by Cunningham to be one of the finest specimens of Indian sculpture, but I have never seen a photograph or drawing of it sufficient to justify a judgement on the artistic merits of the work [1]

[1] Cunningham *The Bhilsa Topes* (London, 1854), *Arch S. Reports*, vol x (1889, p 56), Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship* (2nd ed, 1873), *Ep Ind*, ii 87, 366, and other works cited by Burgess in *J R A S*, 1902, pp 29-45 Of late years much has been done to conserve and restore the Sânchî group of buildings, and an immense mass of photographs has been collected, but nobody has ventured to tackle the pile of material and prepare an adequate account of the remains. Mr Cousens gives reason for believing that the *original stûpa* existed before Asoka's time (*Prog Rep A S W I*, 1899-1900, p 4) He has photographed the pieces of the statue (negative 1861), and gives a plan of the *stupa* drawn to scale

A very interesting relic, belonging in part to the age of Asoka, was discovered by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1873 at Bharhut, a village in the Nâgaudh (Nagod) State of Baghelkhand, about ninety-five miles south-west from Allahabad. He found there the remains of a brick *stûpa* of moderate size, nearly 68 feet in diameter, surrounded by an elaborately carved railing bearing numerous dedicatory inscriptions in characters closely resembling those of Asoka's records. The *stûpa* had been covered with a coat of plaster, in which hundreds of triangular-shaped recesses had been made for the reception of lights to illuminate the monument. It was the practice of the Indian Buddhists, as it is that of their co-religionists now in Burma, to decorate their holy buildings on festival days in every possible way, with flowers, garlands, banners, and lights.

The *stûpa* has, I believe, wholly disappeared, and portions of the richly sculptured railing have been saved only by the precaution of removing them to Calcutta, where they now form one of the principal treasures of the Indian Museum. The railing was a little more than 7 feet high, and was divided into quadrants by openings facing the cardinal points, which were framed in elaborate gateways similar to those at Sânchî. The sculptures of the railing and gateways were principally devoted to the illustration of the Buddhist *Jâtakas*, or Birth stories. As at Sânchî, the buildings were of different ages, the *stûpa* itself probably dating from the time of Asoka,

while one of the gateways is known to have been erected in the days of the Sunga kings, who succeeded the Mauryas The railing, which may have been considerably earlier than the gateways, was composed of pillars, three cross-bars or rails, and a heavy coping Each of the pillars is a monolith bearing a central medallion on each face, with a half medallion at the top and another at the bottom. Every member of the structure is covered with rich and spirited sculpture in low relief, which is of exceptional interest for the history of Buddhism, because it is interpreted to a large extent by contemporary explanatory inscriptions [1]

The more or less similar railing, fragments of which exist at Bodh Gayâ, has been generally designated as the 'Asoka railing,' but really belongs, like the Bharhut gateway, to Sunga times [2] Bâbû P. C Mukharjî found at Patna parts of at least three stone railings, some of which must date from Asoka's reign The inscribed and sculptured railing at Besnagar, near Bhilsâ or Bhalsâ, and not far from Sânchî, certainly belongs approximately to the time of Asoka. The sculptures are similar to those at Bharhut and Sânchî [3]

[1] Cunningham wrote 'Bharhut,' and others spell 'Bharaut,' but the late Dîwân of Rewâ told me that the correct spelling is 'Barhut' The ruins are not so far from Allahabad as Cunningham estimated. They are described in his special monograph, *The Stûpa of Bharhut* (London, 1879) The inscriptions are dealt with in *Ind Ant*, xiv 138, xxi. 225.

[2] Marshall, *J R A S*, 1908, p 1096, Pl iv

[3] Cunningham, *Reports*, x 38, Pl xiii.

The progress of the excavations at Sârnâth may be expected to disclose more remains of the Maurya age, but they are difficult to get at, being buried under the buildings of later generations

In ancient India, as is now a common practice in China, both the Buddhists and the Jains were in the habit of defraying the cost of expensive religious edifices by subscription, each subscriber or group of subscribers being given the credit of having contributed a particular pillar, coping-stone, or other portion of the edifice on which the contributor's name was inscribed The subscriptions, of course, must have been collected in cash, the work being carried out by the architect according to plan The record of individual donors was intended not only to gratify their vanity and the natural desire for the perpetuation of their names, but also for the practical purpose of securing for themselves and their families an accumulation of spiritual merit to serve as a defence against the dangers of rebirth This special purpose is frequently expressed in the Indian records. Dedicatory inscriptions were very numerous at Bharhut. It is interesting to observe that the same practice of building by subscription existed in Hellenistic Asia At the temple of Labranda in Caria, dating from the reign of Nero, or a little later, Sir Charles Fellows found twelve fluted columns, each of which bore a panel recording that it was the gift of such and such a person [1].

[1] Fellows, *Asia Minor* (London, 1838), pp 261, 331, and plate.

Besides the statue of the saint at Sânchî already noticed, two or three other examples of sculpture in the round apparently assignable to the Maurya period are known The most remarkable is the inscribed colossal statue of a man found at Parkham, a village between Agra and Mathurâ The figure, executed in grey sandstone highly polished, stands about 7 feet high, and is massive, if not clumsy, in its proportions The face, unfortunately, is mutilated and the arms have been broken off The dress, a loose robe confined by two broad bands, one below the breast and the other round the loins, is peculiar The inscription, which has not been edited properly, seems to be in characters substantially identical with those used in the edicts [1]

A colossal female statue, 6 feet 7 inches in height, uninscribed, but supposed on account of the costume to belong to the same period, was found at Besnagar, and is specially noteworthy as being the only known early female figure in the round The arms are missing and the face is damaged, but so far as I can judge from a photograph, the work is of considerable merit [2] If other specimens of independent statues belonging to the Maurya age exist they are of inferior interest

Asoka took special delight in erecting monolithic

[1] Cunningham, *Reports*, xx 40, Pl vi The meaning of the statue, which has no obvious connexion with Buddhism, is not known

[2] Ibid, x 44

pillars, inscribed and uninscribed, in great numbers and designed on a magnificent scale, regardless of cost. These pillars, many of which, more or less complete, are known, give us a better notion of the treasure, taste, and skill lavished upon Asoka's architectural works than do any of the other monuments Hiuen Tsang mentions specifically sixteen of such pillars, four or five of which can be identified with existing monuments more or less convincingly, and, on the other hand, most of the extant pillars are not referred to by the Chinese pilgrim The inscribed pillars now known number ten, of which only two can be positively identified with those noticed by him Fortunately, two pillars—one uninscribed, the other bearing a copy of the first six Pillar Edicts—still stand in a condition practically perfect, and a detailed description of these will suffice to give the reader an adequate notion of the whole class The recent discovery of the magnificent capital of the Sârnâth pillar has revealed the finest example of Maurya art known to exist

The perfect uninscribed pillar at Bakhirâ near Basâr, the ancient Vaisâli, in the Muzaffarpur District, N Bihâr, is a monolith of fine sandstone, highly polished for its whole length of 32 feet above the water level A square pedestal with three steps is said to exist under water The shaft tapers uniformly from a diameter of 49 8 inches at the water level to 38 7 at the top The principal member of the capital, 2 feet 10 inches in height, is bell-shaped in the Perse-

politan style, and is surmounted by an oblong abacus 12 inches high, which serves as a pedestal for a lion seated on its haunches, and 4½ feet in height. Two or three mouldings are inserted between the shaft and the bell capital, and one intervenes between the latter and the abacus The total height above the level of the water is 44 feet 2 inches. Including the submerged portion the length of the monument cannot be less than 50 feet, and its weight is estimated to be 50 tons[1]

The inscribed Lauriyâ-Nandangarh or Mathiah pillar in the Champâran District, N Bihâr, resembles that at Bakhirâ in general design, but is lighter and less massive, and consequently very graceful (*Frontispiece*) The polished shaft, 32 feet 9½ inches in height, diminishes from a base diameter of 35½ inches to a diameter of only 22¼ inches at the top The abacus, which is circular instead of oblong, is decorated on the edge with an artistic bas-relief representing a row of geese pecking their food The height of the capital including the lion, which faces the rising sun, is 6 feet 10 inches, and consequently the entire monument is nearly 40 feet high The cable-string courses and 'egg and dart' ovolo which serve as mouldings are admirably executed, and the design and workmanship of the whole are rightly praised as displaying both knowledge and power[2]

[1] Cunningham, *Reports*, i. 56, xvi 12

[2] Ibid, i 73, Pl xxiv, xvi 104, Pl xxvii (copied in frontispiece), Caddy, in *Proc A S B* 1895, p 155 The correct

The circular abacus of the Allahabad pillar is decorated, instead of the geese, with a graceful scroll of alternate lotus and honeysuckle, resting on a beaded astragalus moulding, seemingly of Greek origin. According to tradition the monument was originally surmounted by a lion, and in 1838 a Captain Smith of the Royal Engineers was commissioned to design a new capital in the style of the Bakhirâ and Lauriyâ-Nandangarh pillars But his attempt was a lamentable failure and resulted in a monstrosity which Cunningham considered to be 'not unlike a stuffed poodle stuck on the top of an inverted flower-pot' Many years have passed since I saw the thing, but I suppose it is still there

Two mutilated pillars exist at Râmpurwâ in the Champâran District The one which bears a copy of the first six Pillar Edicts was surmounted by a finely designed lion, recently discovered buried close by. Mr. Marshall notes that the 'muscles and thews of the beast are vigorously modelled, and though conventionalized in certain particulars, it is endowed with a vitality and strength which rank it among the finest sculptures of the Maurya period' The companion uninscribed pillar had a bull capital, also discovered by research, but unfortunately much injured The

name of the neighbouring village is Nandangaṛh, not Navandgaṛh, as stated by Cunningham.

[1] Cunningham, *Reports*, i 298–300; *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 37

bell section of the lion capital was attached to the shaft by a barrel-shaped bolt of pure copper, measuring 2 feet $0\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length, with a diameter of $4\frac{5}{16}$ inches in the centre, and $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches at each end, which was accurately fitted without cement[1]

The line of pillars in the Muzaffarpur and Champâran Districts at Bakhirâ (Vaisâli), Lauriyâ-Ararâj (Radhiah), Lauriyâ-Nandangarh (Mathiah), and Râmpurwâ evidently marks the course of the royal road from the northern bank of the Ganges opposite the capital to the Nepâl valley The hamlet of Râmpurwâ is not far from the foot of the hills Three of the five pillars are inscribed with practically identical copies of the first six Pillar Edicts, which were thus published for the edification of travellers along the high road The other known pillars were all placed in equally conspicuous positions at important cities, places of pilgrimage, or on frequented roads in the home provinces No pillar has yet been found in the distant provinces, where the Rock Edicts were incised The pillars are all composed of fine sandstone, quarried in most cases apparently at Chanâr (Chunar) in the Mirzâpur District and were frequently erected at localities hundreds of miles distant from any quarry capable of supplying the exceptionally choice blocks required for such huge monoliths Their fabrication, conveyance, and erection bear eloquent testimony to

[1] Cunningham, *Reports*, xvi 112, Pl xxviii, xxii 51, Pl vi, vii Marshall, *J R A S*, 1908, pp 1085-8, Pl i The copper bolt is in the Indian Museum, Calcutta

the skill and resource of the stonecutters and engineers of the Maurya age

Sixteen centuries later, in A.D. 1356, the two Asoka pillars which now stand near Delhi on the Kothila and the Ridge respectively were transported by Sultan Fîroz Shah the one from Topra in the Ambâla (Umballa) District, now in the Panjâb, and the other from Mîrath (Meerut) in the United Provinces. The process of removal of the Topra monument has been described by a contemporary author, whose graphic account is worth transcribing as showing the nature of the difficulties so frequently and successfully surmounted by Asoka's engineers

The historian relates that—

'After Sultan Firoz returned from his expedition against Thatta he often made excursions in the neighbourhood of Delhi In this part of the country there were two stone columns. One was in the village of Topra in the District of Sâdhaura and Khizrâbâd, at the foot of the hills, the other in the vicinity of the town of Mirath When Firoz Shah first beheld these columns he was filled with admiration and resolved to remove them with great care as trophies to Delhi

Khizrâbâd is 90 *kos* from Delhi, in the vicinity of the hills When the Sultan visited that District and saw the column in the village of Topra, he resolved to remove it to Delhi and there erect it as a memorial to future generations After thinking over the best means of lowering the column, orders were issued commanding the attendance of all the people dwelling in the neighbourhood, within and without the Doâb, and all soldiers, both horse and foot They were ordered to bring all implements and materials suitable for the work Directions were issued for bringing parcels of the *sembal*

(silk-cotton) tree[1] Quantities of this silk-cotton were placed round the column, and when the earth at its base was removed, it fell gently over on the bed prepared for it. The cotton was then removed by degrees, and after some days the pillar lay safe upon the ground When the foundations of the pillar were examined, a large square stone was found as a base, which also was taken out

The pillar was then encased from top to bottom in reeds and raw skins, so that no damage might accrue to it. A carriage with forty-two wheels was constructed, and ropes were attached to each wheel Thousands of men hauled at every rope, and after great labour and difficulty the pillar was raised on to the carriage A strong rope was fastened to each wheel, and 200 men [42 × 200 = 8,400] pulled at each of these ropes By the simultaneous exertions of so many thousand men, the carriage was moved, and was brought to the banks of the Jumna Here the Sultan came to meet it A number of large boats had been collected, some of which could carry 5,000 and 7,000 maunds of grain, and the least of them 2,000 maunds The column was very ingeniously transferred to these boats, and was then conducted to Firozâbad, where it was landed and conveyed into the Kushk with infinite labour and skill

At this time the author of this book was twelve years of age and a pupil of the respected Mir Khân When the pillar was brought to the palace, a building was commenced for its reception near the Jâmi Masjid [mosque], and the most skilful architects and workmen were employed. It was constructed of stone and chunam [fine mortar], and consisted of several stages or steps. When a step was finished the column was raised on to it, another step was then built and the pillar was again raised, and so on in succession until

[1] *Salmalia Malabarica* (*pentaphyllum*) The cotton obtained from this tree was used on account of its elasticity

it reached the intended height. On arriving at this stage, other contrivances had to be devised to place it in an erect position. Ropes of great thickness were obtained, and windlasses were placed on each of the six stages of the base. The ends of the ropes were fastened to the top of the pillar, and the other ends passed over the windlasses, which were firmly secured with many fastenings The wheels were then turned, and the column was raised about half a *gaz* [yard] Logs of wood and bags of cotton were then placed under it to prevent it sinking again In this way, and by degrees, the column was raised to the perpendicular. Large beams were then placed round it as supports until quite a cage of scaffolding was formed It was thus secured in an upright position straight as an arrow, without the smallest deviation from the perpendicular The square stone before spoken of was placed under the pillar[1]'

Asoka erected about thirty or more such monuments When labour so great was required to move one a distance of a hundred and twenty miles we may imagine how much energy was expended in setting up thirty pillars, some of which were much heavier than that removed by Fīroz Shah, and were transported to distances still greater

Ten of the pillars known at present are inscribed. Six of these bear copies of the first six Pillar Edicts, the seventh edict, the most important of all, being found on one monument only, the Delhi-Topra pillar, the removal of which has been described. The

[1] Shams-i-Sirâj, quoted in Cunningham, *Reports*, xiv. 78; and Carr Stephens, *Archaeology of Delhi*, p. 131; Elliot, *Hist India*, iii. 350

records on two pillars in the Nepalese Tarâi commemorate Asoka's visit to the Buddhist holy places in B C 249, and the Sânchî and Sârnâth pillars are inscribed with variant recensions of the Minor Pillar Edict dealing with Church discipline A detailed list of the inscribed pillars will be found at the end of this chapter

Many more pillars remain to be discovered The two great monuments, one surmounted by the figure of a bull and the other by the wheel of the Law, which stood at the entrance of the famous Jetavana monastery near Srâvasti, are said to exist, and notwithstanding certain recent finds which seem to controvert my opinion, I still believe that the ruins of Srâvastî lie buried in Nepalese jungles on the upper course of the Râptî The pillars which may prove to be those of the Jetavana are located by report near Bairât and Matiâri in Tahsîl Nepâlganj Other pillars are rumoured to exist in the Nepalese Tarâi to the north of Nichhawal beyond the Gorakhpur frontier, and also at Barewâ and Maurangarh, north of the Champâran District[1]

Only two of the ten inscribed pillars known, namely, those at Rummindeî and Sârnâth, can be identified certainly with monuments noticed by Hiuen Tsang A third, the Niglîva pillar, which does not occupy its original position, may or may not be the one which he mentions in connexion with the *stûpa* of Konâkamana There is, however, no doubt that

[1] Mukharjî, *Antiquities in the Tarâi, Nepâl*, p 59

seven out of the ten escaped notice in the pilgrim's memoirs It is a curious fact that he never makes the slightest allusion to Asoka's edicts, whether incised on rocks or pillars When he does refer to an alleged inscription of Asoka in the statement that a pillar at Pâtaliputra recorded the donation of all Jambudvîpa to the Church, he is probably only retailing the gossip of local monks, who could not read the inscription and invented an interpretation Similar fraudulent readings of old inscriptions are constantly offered by local guides, thus, for example, Shams-i-Sirâj relates that 'certain infidel Hindus' interpreted the inscription on the Delhi-Topra pillar to mean that 'no one would be able to remove the obelisk from its place till there should arise in the latter days a Muhammadan king named Sultan Fîroz' I do not believe for a moment that Asoka ever either perpetrated the folly of professing to give away all Jambudvîpa or recorded on a monument the nonsense attributed to him His real records are all thoroughly sensible and matter-of-fact The reason that the Chinese pilgrim ignores them presumably must be that in his time, nine centuries after the execution of the inscriptions, nobody could read them. The alphabets current in India during the seventh century A D, which are well known, differ widely from those used in the time of Asoka, and the difference is quite sufficient to account for his inscriptions being regarded as illegible. By that time the true personality of the great emperor had been covered up by

a mass of mythological legend, and nobody cared to search for the genuine records of his reign.

The wonderful rock inscriptions, although wanting in the artistic interest of the monolithic pillars, are in some respects the most interesting monuments of the reign. They are found at twelve distinct localities in the more remote provinces of the empire, and the contents may be described generally as sermons on *dharma*, or the Law of Piety. The longer documents are either variant recensions, more or less complete, of the series known as the Fourteen Rock Edicts, or substitutes for certain members of that series. The shorter records include the two documents classed as the Minor Rock Edicts, and the peculiar Bhâbrâ Edict. The inscriptions are found over an area extending from 34° 20′ to 14° 49′ N. lat., and from about 72° 15′ to 85° 50′ E. long., that is to say, twenty degrees of latitude, and thirteen of longitude. It is possible, and not improbable, that other examples remain to be discovered in Afghanistan and tribal territory beyond the north-western frontier, or even within the limits of India.

Beginning from the north-west, the first set of inscriptions is found at Shâhbâzgarhi in the Yûsufzai subdivision of the Peshâwar District of the North-West Frontier Province, about forty miles to the north-east of Peshâwar, and more than a thousand miles in a direct line distant from Asoka's capital. The principal inscription, containing all the Fourteen Edicts except the twelfth, is recorded on both

the eastern and western faces of a mass of trap rock, 24 feet long and 10 feet high, which lies on the slope of a hill to the south-east of the village.

The Toleration Edict, No. XII discovered a few years ago by the late Sir Harold Deane, is incised on a separate rock about fifty yards distant from the main record. The text of all the documents, being nearly perfect, is of high value to the student[1]

The next recension in order is that at Mânsahra (Mânsera) in the Hazâra District of the North-West Frontier Province, N lat 34° 20′, E long 73° 13′, about fifteen miles to the north of Abbottabad The inscription not being near habitations or on any main line of road, the reason for the selection of this site, which is not apparent at first sight, has been made clear by Dr. Stein, who found an ancient road leading to a place of pilgrimage now called Brerî As at Rûpnâth and Girnâr the inscription was placed so as to catch the eye of pilgrims. The text is less complete than that at Shâhbâzgarhi[2]. Both of the north-western versions agree in giving special prominence to the Toleration Edict, which at Mânsahra has one side of the rock to itself, and at Shâhbâzgarhi is inscribed on a separate

[1] *Ep Ind.*, i. 16, ii 447, Cunningham, *Reports*, v 9-22, Pl. iii-v, Foucher, in 11^me *Congrès des Orientalistes*, Paris, p 93 This recension is sometimes cited by the name of Kapurdagiri, a village two miles distant.

[2] *Ep Ind* ii, 447; *Ind Ant*, xix (1890), p. 43, giving abstract of M. Senart's article in *J As*, Stein, *Prog Report, A S N W Frontier Prov*, 1904-5, p 17 Brerî is the Kashmîrî equivalent of Bhaṭṭârikâ = Devî or Durgâ

rock Both the recensions further agree in being inscribed in the form of Aramaic character, now generally called Kharoshthî, which is written from right to left, and appears to have been introduced by Persian officials into the north-western regions of India after the conquest of the Indus valley by Darius, son of Hystaspes, about B C 500

The third version of the Fourteen Edicts, and perhaps the most perfect of all, discovered in 1860, is on a rock about a mile and a half to the south of the village of Kâlsî (N lat 30° 32′, E long 77° 51′), in the Dehra Dûn District of the United Provinces, on the road from Sahâranpur to the cantonment of Chakrâta, and about fifteen miles westwards from the hill station of Mussoorie (Mansûri). The record is incised on the south-eastern face of a white quartz boulder shaped like the frustum of a pyramid, about 10 feet in diameter at the base and 6 feet at the top, which stands at the foot of the upper of two terraces overlooking the junction of the Jumna and Tons rivers The confluences of rivers being regarded as sacred the place probably used to be visited by pilgrims, and must have been chosen for that reason as a suitable spot for the inscription Some pilasters and other wrought stones indicate the former existence of buildings in the vicinity The text agrees closely with the Mânsahra version, but exhibits certain peculiarities. A well-drawn figure of an elephant labelled 'the superlative elephant' (*gajatama*) is incised on one side of the boulder The character, as in all the

Asoka inscriptions, excepting those at Mânsahra and Shâhbâzgarhi, is an ancient form of the Brâhmî script, written from left to right, and the parent of the modern Devanâgarî and allied alphabets. The alphabetical forms used in the different inscriptions vary to some extent in details[1].

Two copies of the Fourteen Edicts were published at places on the western coast The fragment found at Sopârâ, in the Thâna District, to the north of Bombay, consisting of only a few words from the eighth edict, is enough to show that a copy of the set of documents once existed there Sopâra, still a prosperous country town (N lat 19° 25′, E long 72° 48′), was an important port and mart under the name of Sopâraka, Sûrpâraka, or Shurpâraka in ancient times for many centuries, and contained some notable Hindu and Buddhist edifices At one time the sea appears to have come up to the walls of the town, but the channel has been silted up for ages[2]

The famous Girnâr version, first described by Colonel Tod in 1822, lay buried in dense forest and might never have come to light had not a local notable made a causeway through the jungle for the

[1] The correct name is Kâlsî, not Khâlsî, as in the books. Cunningham, *Reports*, i 244, Pl xl, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p 12, Pl. iv, *Ep. Ind.* ii 447, *Pioneer Mail*, 23 Sept., 1904. The boulder is not in danger of erosion by the river, as was at one time feared

[2] *Ind Ant.*, i. 321, iv 282; vii 259, Bhagwân Lâl Indraji, 'Sopâra' (*J. Bo. Br. R A S.*, 1882, reprint), *Prog Report*, *A. S W. I* for 1897-8, pp. 7-10, with map.

benefit of pilgrims to the hill, which is one of the most sacred places venerated by the Jains. The ancient town of Jûnâgarh (Ûparkot), capital of a State in the peninsula of Kâthiâwâr or Surâshtra (N. lat 21° 31′, E long 70° 36′), stands between the Girnâr and Dâtâr hills. The Sudarsana Lake constructed under the orders of Chandragupta Maurya and equipped with watercourses and sluices by Asoka's local representatives, filled the whole valley between the Ûparkot rocks on the west and the inscription rock on the east. That rock, a nearly hemispherical mass of granite, therefore stood on the margin of the lake, which disappeared long since. Indeed its very existence had been forgotten, and its limits have been traced with difficulty. The Fourteen Edicts are incised on the north-eastern face of the rock, the top being occupied by the valuable record of the Satrap Rudradâman (A. D. 150) and the western face by the important inscriptions of Skandagupta's governor (A. D. 457). The edicts have suffered a good deal of injury, but some care is now taken to protect them. Imperfect copies of them were the materials on which M. Senart was obliged to rely chiefly when writing his classical work on the inscriptions of Asoka, but since then accurate copies have been taken, and in 1899-1900 two fragments, which had been separated from the rock, were recovered by Professor Rhys Davids.[1]

[1] *A. S. W. I.*, vol ii, p. 95, Pl. ix; *Prog. Rep. A. S. W. I.*, 1898-9, p. 15; *J. R. A. S.*, 1900, p. 335.

Two recensions of the Fourteen Edicts, with modifications, exist on the eastern side of India, near the coast of the Bay of Bengal, within the limits of the kingdom of Kalinga conquered by Asoka in B C. 261 Both recensions agree in omitting Edicts XI, XII, and XIII, which were considered unsuitable locally, and in substituting for them the Borderers' and Provincials' Edicts specially drafted to meet the needs of the newly annexed province, and not published elsewhere

The northern copy is incised on a rock called Aswastama on the northern face and close to the summit of a hill near the village of Dhauli (N lat. 20° 15′, E long 85° 50′), about seven miles to the south of Bhuvanesvar, in the Purî District, Orissa The inscription occupies the prepared surface of a sloping sheet of stone, which is watched over from above by the well-executed fore-part of an elephant, about 4 feet high, cut out of the solid rock The viceregal town of Tosali appears to have been in the neighbourhood [1].

The southern version is engraved on the face of a rock situated at an elevation of about 120 feet in a mass of granitic gneiss rising near the centre of an ancient walled town called Jaugada or Jogadh (N lat 19° 33′, E long. 84° 50′) in the Ganjâm District,

[1] *Imp. Gazetteer* (1908), *s v* Dhauli, Cunningham, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p 15, *Reports*, xiii 95 A photograph of the elephant forms the frontispiece of *E. Hist of India* (1908)

Madras, which probably is the town Samâpâ mentioned in the local edicts[1]

The Minor Rock Edicts, which are believed for the reasons stated in Chapter I (*ante*, p. 26) to be the earliest of the Asoka inscriptions, are found, like the Fourteen Rock Edicts, only in the remoter provinces The second Minor Edict, consisting of a short summary of the Law of Piety, expressed in a style different from that of the other edicts, occurs in Mysore only, where three copies of it exist as a supplement to the first edict Probably this supplementary document was composed in the office of the Prince of Suvarnagiri and published on his viceregal authority The Mysore recensions of both the edicts were incised in three localities, all close to one another, in the Chitaldûrg District of northern Mysore, namely, Siddâpura (N lat 14° 49′, E. long 76° 47′) Jatinga-Râmesvara, and Brahmagiri, near the site of a large ancient town Variant recensions of Edict I occur at Sahasrâm (N lat 24° 57′, E. long 84° 1′) in the Shâhâbâd District, S Bihâr, Rûpnâth in the Jabalpur District, Central Provinces, and at Bairât (N lat 27° 27′, E long 76° 12′) in the Jaypur State, Râjputâna That document gives a valuable account of the emperor's religious history and is

[1] Cunningham, *Inscr of Asoka*, p 17, *Reports*, xiii 112, Sewell, *Lists of Antiq*, *Madras*, i 4, *Ind. Ant* i. 219, Sir W Elliot in *Mad J Lit and Science*, April-Sept 1858, p. 75, *Prog Rep A S Madras*, 1903-4, 1904-5, 1906-7 The inscription is now protected by a roof and iron railing

devoted to the inculcation of his favourite precept, 'Let small and great exert themselves' Thus it appears that Edict I was published in four widely separated regions, a clear proof that much importance was attached to its teaching

The Rûpnâth inscription was placed in a singularly wild and out-of-the-way glen, 'a perfect chaos of rocks and pools overshadowed by rugged precipices fifty to sixty feet high, in whose clefts and caverns wild beasts find a quiet refuge' Indeed, while Mr Cousens was taking a photograph, he was being watched by a panther crouching less than twenty yards away The spot, which is still visited by pilgrims who worship the local deity as a form of Siva, became sacred by reason of the three pools one above another, which are connected in the rainy season by a lovely waterfall The detached boulder upon which the edict is inscribed lies under a great tree just above the western margin of the lowest pool, and may have fallen from its original position higher up [1]

The Sahasrâm recension is engraved on the face of the rock in an artificial cave near the summit of a hill to the east of the town, now surmounted by a shrine

[1] Rûpnâth is 14 miles west of Sleemanâbâd Railway Station Cousens, *Prog Rep A. S W I*, 1903-4, para 113, Bloch, *Annual Rep A. S. E. Circle*, 1907-8, p 19 Dr Bloch obtained a good impression of the inscription, which has not yet been published See also Cunningham, *Reports*, vii 58, ix 38, and *Inscr of Asoka*, p 21

of a Muhammadan saint In Asoka's time the place must have been visited by Hindu pilgrims [1].

The Bairât version, discovered by Mr. Carlleyle in 1872-3, is engraved on the lower part of the southern face of a huge block of volcanic rock 'as big as a house' at the foot of the 'Pândus' hill' close to the very ancient town of Bairât [2]

The peculiar Bhâbrâ Edict, giving the list of Asoka's favourite passages of scripture, was incised on a boulder within the precincts of a Buddhist monastery on the top of another hill near the same town The boulder is now preserved in Calcutta [3]

The cave dwellings excavated in the refractory gneiss of the Barâbar and Nâgârjuni hills near Gayâ by Asoka and his grandson for the use of the Âjîvikas, although not beautiful as works of art, are wonderful monuments of patient skill and infinite labour, misapplied as it seems to the modern observer The largest is the Gopikâ cave dedicated by Dasaratha, which is 46 feet 5 inches long by 19 feet 2 inches broad, with semicircular ends and a vaulted roof 10½ feet in height The whole of the interior is highly polished The cost of such a work must have been enormous, and the expenditure of so much treasure on the Âjîvikas is good evidence of the influential position held in

[1] *Imp Gazetteer* (1908), *s v* Sasarâm, Cunningham, *Inscr of Asoka*, p 20.

[2] Cunningham, *Reports* vi 97, *Inscr of Asoka*, p 22 The hill has other names

[3] The 'second Bairât rock' of Cunningham *Inscr of Asoka*, p 24, *Reports*, ii 247

Asoka's days by that now forgotten order of ascetics, who, although detested by orthodox Buddhists, were able to win favour from the sovereign who did 'reverence to all denominations[1]'

The arts in the age of Asoka undoubtedly had attained to a high standard of excellence

The royal engineers and architects were capable of designing and executing spacious and lofty edifices in brick, wood, and stone, of constructing massive embankments equipped with convenient sluices and other appliances, of extracting, chiselling, and handling enormous monoliths, and of excavating commodious chambers with burnished interiors in the most refractory rock Sculpture was the handmaid of architecture, and all buildings of importance were lavishly decorated with a profusion of ornamental patterns, an infinite variety of spirited bas-reliefs, and meritorious statues of men and animals The rare detached statues of the human figure have been noticed But the

[1] The caves are described by Cunningham, *Insc of Asoka*, pp 30–2, *Reports*, i, pp 40–52, Pl xviii–xx, and by Caddy, *Proc A S B*, 1895, pp 156-8 'The Ajîvikas or naked ascetics Tradition tells us that behind Jetavana [at Srâvastî] they used to practise false austerities A number of the Brethren seeing them painfully squatting on their heels, swinging in the air like bats, reclining on thorns, scorching themselves with five fires, and so forth, in their various false austerities, were moved to ask the Blessed One whether any good resulted therefrom "None whatever," answered the Master' (Cowell and Francis, *transl Jâtakas*, Introd to No 144, vol i, p 307) See D R Bhandarkar, 'Epigraphic Notes and Questions,' *J Bo Br R A S*, vol xx

lions on the monolithic pillars are better. The newly discovered capital at Sârnâth is described by Mr Marshall in the following somewhat bold language, which is, however, justified by the photographs · 'Lying near the column were the broken portions of the upper part of the shaft and a magnificent capital of the well-known Persepolitan bell-shaped type with four lions above, supporting in their midst a stone wheel or *dharmachakra*, the symbol of the law first promulgated at Sârnâth Both bell and lions are in an excellent state of preservation and masterpieces in point of both style and technique—the finest carvings, indeed, that India has yet produced, and unsurpassed, I venture to think, by anything of their kind in the ancient world [1]

The skill of the stone-cutter may be said to have attained perfection, and to have accomplished tasks which would, perhaps, be found beyond the powers of the twentieth century Gigantic shafts of hard sandstone, thirty or forty feet in length, were dressed and proportioned with the utmost nicety, receiving a polish which no modern mason knows how to impart to the material Enormous surfaces of the hardest gneiss were burnished like mirrors, bricks of huge dimensions were successfully fired, and the joints of masonry were fitted with extreme accuracy White ants and other destructive agencies have prevented the preservation of any specimens of woodwork, save a few posts and beams buried in the silt of the rivers at Patna, but

[1] *Annual Rep A S*, 1904–5, p. 36

the character of the carpenter's art of the period is well known from the bas-relief pictures and from the railings and other forms in stone, which, as Fergusson so persistently urged, undoubtedly are copied from wooden prototypes. Burma teaches us that wooden architecture need not be lacking in dignity or magnificence, and we may feel assured that the timber structures which preceded the Bharhut rail and the Sânchî gateways were worthy of a powerful sovereign, a stately court, and a wealthy hierarchy The beads, jewellery, and seals of the Maurya period and earlier ages which have been found from time to time prove that the ancient Indian lapidaries and goldsmiths were not inferior in delicacy of touch to those of any other country The recorded descriptions and sculptured representations of chariots, harness, arms, accoutrements, dress, textile fabrics, and other articles of necessity or luxury indicate, that in the third century B C. the Indian empire had attained a stage of material civilization fully equal to that reached under the famous Mughal emperors eighteen and nineteen hundred years later

The sculptures in bas-relief, even if they cannot be often described as beautiful, although some may be, are full of life and vigour, and frankly realistic No attempt is made to idealize the objects depicted, although the artists have allowed their fancy considerable play in the representations of tritons and other fabulous creatures The pictorial scenes, even without the help of perspective, tell their stories vividly, and

many of the figures are drawn with much spirit The purely decorative elements exhibit great variety of design, and some of the fruit and flower patterns are extremely elegant Images of the Buddha were not known in the time of Asoka, and are consequently absent from his sculptures The Teacher is represented by symbols only, the empty seat, the pair of foot-prints, the wheel

The Greek accounts, read along with the Edicts, leave on my mind the impression that the civil and military government of the Mauryas was better organized than that of Akbar or Shahjahân. It is certain that the Greek authors speak with the utmost respect of the power and resources of the kingdoms of the Prasii and Gangaridae, that is to say, Magadha and Bengal, that Alexander considered Poros to be a formidable opponent, and that Chandragupta was able to defeat first the Macedonian garrisons and then Seleukos The military strength of the government was reflected in the orderly civil polity and the developed state of the arts

The care taken to publish the imperial edicts and commemorative records by incising them in imperishable characters, most skilfully executed, on rocks and pillars situated in great cities, on main lines of com munication, or at sacred spots frequented by pilgrims, implies that a knowledge of reading and writing was widely diffused, and that many people must have been able to read the documents The same inference may be drawn from the fact that the inscriptions are com-

posed, not in any learned scholastic tongue, but in vernacular dialects intelligible to the common people, and modified when necessary to suit local needs It is probable that learning was fostered by the numerous monasteries, and that the boys and girls in hundreds of villages learned their lessons from the monks and nuns, as they do now in Burma from the monks Asoka, it should be noted, encouraged nunneries, and makes particular reference more than once to female lay disciples as well as to nuns I think it likely that the percentage of literacy among the Buddhist population in Asoka's time was higher than it is now in many provinces of British India The latest returns show that in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, which include many great cities and ancient capitals, the number of persons per 1000 able to read and write amounts to only 57 males and 2 females In Burma, where the Buddhist monasteries flourish, the corresponding figures are 378 and 45[1] I believe that the Buddhist monasteries and nunneries in the days of their glory must have been, on the whole, powerful agencies for good in India, and that the disappearance of Buddhism was a great loss to the country

Two scripts, as before observed, were in use The Aramaic Kharoshthî, written from right to left, was ordinarily confined to the north-western corner of India, but the scribe of the Brahmagiri version of the Minor Rock Edicts showed off his knowledge by writing part of his signature in that character The Brâhmî script,

[1] *The Indian Empire, Imp Gazetteer*, vol iv (1907), p 416

the parent of the Devanâgarî and most of the existing Indian alphabets, appears in the Asoka inscriptions and the nearly contemporary records at Bhattiprolu and in Ceylon in so many varieties that it must have been already in use for several centuries, although no extant example can be cited which is certainly earlier than Asoka Bûhler seems to have been right in deriving this script from Mesopotamia, and the date of its introduction into India may have been about B C 700 or 800

The story of the origins of the early civilization of India has been very imperfectly investigated and still remains to be written We can perceive dimly the main lines of communication by sea and land along which the elements of the arts and sciences travelled to India from Egypt and the continent of Asia, but our actual knowledge of the subject is extremely fragmentary The imposing fabric of the Achaemenian empire evidently impressed the Indian mind, and several facts indicate the existence of a strong Persian influence on the Indian civilization of the Maurya age

The free use of pillars was the dominant feature of Achaemenian architecture and Asoka's fondness for columns is in itself an indication of Persian influence. But no indirect inference is needed to prove the Persian origin of his monoliths which frankly reproduce the Persepolitan bell-capital surmounted by animals, frequently placed back to back. The Sârnâth capital described above (*ante*, p. 136), while unmistak-

ably Persepolitan, is far less conventional than its prototypes, and much superior in both design and execution to anything in Persia, so far as I can ascertain.[1] The Persepolitan capital long continued to be used as a decorative element in Indian sculpture, and is common in the reliefs from Gandhâra, the so-called Graeco-Buddhist school

The idea of issuing long proclamations engraved on the rocks most likely was suggested by the practice of Darius, and the special variation of using the proclamations as sermons may have been originated by the inscription of that monarch at Naksh-i-Rustam, which is supposed to be 'preceptive not historical,' and to contain 'the last solemn admonition of Darius to his countrymen with respect to their future conduct in policy, morals, and religion' But the text of that document, apparently, has not been published, so it cannot be compared in detail with the Edicts of Asoka[2] The opening phrases of the Edicts, 'Thus saith his Sacred and Gracious Majesty,' and the like, recall, as has often been observed, the style of the Achaemenian records

Several minor details confirm the impression that the Maurya court was very sensible to the influence of the great empire to the west, so recently conquered

[1] Examples of Persian lion capitals may be seen in the Louvre, or reproduced in Perrot and Chipiez, *History of Art in Persia* (London, 1902)

[2] Sir H Rawlinson, *Memoir on the Cuneiform Inscriptions*, vol i, p 312, Canon Rawlinson, *Transl. of Herodotus*, vol iv, p 177

by Alexander The Persian word *dipi* for 'writing' occurs in the Shâhbâzgarhi version of the Edicts; the penalty of cropping the hair (*ante*, p 100) was a Persian punishment [1], and the ceremonial washing of the king's hair, which Strabo, no doubt transcribing Megasthenes, mentions as an Indian custom, seems to be copied from the similar ceremony performed by Xerxes, as related by Herodotus [2] The Persian title of Satrap, which continued to be used in Western India as late as the closing years of the fourth century A D, is not recorded for Maurya times But the monolithic pillars alone are enough to prove the reality of the Persian influence, and M Le Bon seems to be right in maintaining that early Indian art was very largely indebted to Persia for its inspiration [3] The Hellenistic decorative motives, acanthus leaves, and so forth, which are common in ancient Indian sculpture, may have come through either Persia or Alexandria, or by both ways The problems concerning the relation between Indian, Asiatic, and Hellenistic art have never been threshed out, and are too complex for discussion in these pages, but I may say that I am inclined to regard the early Indian bas-reliefs as translations, so to speak, of Alexandrian motives, by which I mean that the scheme of composition is Hellenistic of the Alexandrian school, while the

[1] *Athenaeum*, July 19, 1902

[2] Strabo, Bk xv, ch 69, transl McCrindle, *Ancient India*, p 75, Herodotus, Bk ix 110, *Ind Ant* xxxiv (1905), p 202

[3] Le Bon, *Les Monuments de l'Inde* (Paris, 1893), p 15

spirit, subject, and details are pure Indian. M Le Bon truly observes that 'la puissance de déformation du génie hindou est en effet si grande, que les formes empruntées subissent des transformations qui les rendent bientôt méconnaissables' Many illustrations of this proposition in both plastic art and literature might be cited. When the Indians adopt and adapt a foreign suggestion they do it so cleverly and transmute the spirit of the work so completely that the imitation seems to be indigenous and original

It is, perhaps, advisable to remind the reader that the Persian art referred to was itself based upon Assyrian models, so that in a sense the Indian capitals may be described as Assyrian But the bas-reliefs, while closely related to those of Alexandria, differ completely in style from the stiff formal bas-reliefs of Assyria and Persia I believe it to be probable that India was never, up to quite recent times, more exposed to the impact of foreign ideas than it was during the Maurya age All these matters, however, require much more attentive consideration than they have yet received, and here can be merely alluded to But it seems clear that Indian art in the Maurya and Sunga periods, whatever may have been the nationality of the artists employed, attained a high standard of merit when compared with anything except the masterpieces of Greek genius, and that it would be quite worth while to determine its place in the history of the world's art

The inscriptions dispersed throughout the empire

as described were written either at the capital or at the head quarters of one or other of the viceroys, and then made over to skilled stone-cutters for incision on the rocks and pillars In the extreme north-west the Kharoshthî alphabet was used as being the best known locally, throughout the rest of the empire the Brâhmî script was employed The language was invariably a form of Prâkrit, the vernacular language of the day, closely allied to Sanskrit, especially that of the Vedic variety, on the one hand, and to the modern vernaculars of the country on the other The proclamations published in the home provinces are in the dialect of Magadha, those issued in more remote regions exhibit local peculiarities in spelling, vocabulary, and grammar The various texts of the same edict sometimes differ to a small extent in substance, certain versions being fuller than others

Repetitions, after the manner of the Buddhist scriptures, are frequent, and were inserted designedly, as is explained in the Epilogue to the Fourteen Rock Edicts The style was supposed by the earlier interpreters to be exceedingly uncouth and to display lack of facility in prose composition But now that accurate texts are available and the language is better understood, the style is found to possess a considerable amount of force and simple dignity The desire to give the sovereign's own words often, especially in the Kalinga Edicts, involves transitions from the third person to the first, which are embarrassing to

the translator, but do not imply want of skill in composition. The following versions are as literal as differences of idiom will permit, and, if considered at all successful renderings, will, I hope, support my view of the style of the originals The accuracy of the texts is wonderful A clerical error or engraver's blunder very rarely occurs, and the beauty of the lettering may be judged from the facsimile of the Rummindeî inscription in Plate II I have seen the original twice, and can certify that it is quite as clear as the reduced copy of the impression

The reasons for treating all the inscriptions as anonymous and for adopting the renderings chosen for the royal titles have been stated in Chapter I (*ante*, pp 20, 22) The subject headings, of course, are not in the originals All recent studies of the inscriptions known to me have been utilized in the preparation of the revised versions, which differ materially from those published in the first edition References will be found in the Bibliographical Note appended to Chapter V

Assuming the correctness of the chronology accepted by M Senart, Mr F W Thomas, and myself, which is not admitted by all scholars, the extant inscriptions may be classified in order of date as follows —

EDICTS

	Regnal Year'	B.C
Minor Rock Edicts	13th	257
Bhâbrâ Edict	? ditto	? ditto
Fourteen Rock Edicts	13th & 14th	257 & 256

	'Regnal Year'	B.C.
Kalinga Edicts	?14th or 15th	?256 or 255.
Seven Pillar Edicts	27th & 28th	243 & 242.
Minor Pillar Edicts	29th to 38th	241 to 232

MISCELLANEOUS INSCRIPTIONS.

Cave Dedications of Asoka	13th & 20th	257 & 250.
Tarâi Commemorative Inscriptions	21st	249.
Cave Dedications of Dasaratha	1st	?232

INSCRIBED PILLARS OF ASOKA

Serial No	Name	Position	Remarks
1	Delhi Topra	On summit of Kothila in the ruined city of Fîrozâbâd near Delhi, transported from Topra in Ambâla District in A D 1356 by Sultan Fîroz Tughlak	'Delhi-Sivâlik' (Cunningham), 'lât of Fîroz' or 'D[1]' (Senart) Pillar Edicts I-VII nearly complete Capital modern
2	Delhi Mirath (Meerut)	On ridge at Delhi, broken, removed from Mîrath in A D 1356 by Sultan Fîroz, and set up in the grounds of his hunting-lodge near its present position, where it was re-erected by the Indian Government in 1867	'D[2]' (Senart) Pillar Edicts I-VI much mutilated Capital missing
3	Allahabad	Near Ellenborough Barracks in the Fort, evidently removed from Kausambî, possibly by Sultan Fîroz	Pillar Edicts I-VI, Queen's Edict, Kausâmbî Edict, all imperfect Capital modern, except the abacus.
	Lauriyâ Ararâj	At hamlet of Lauriyâ, 1 mile SW of temple called Ararâj Mahadeo, 20 miles NW of Kesariyâ	'Radhiah' or 'R.' (Senart). Pillar Edicts I-VI practically perfect. Capital lost According to

Serial No.	Name	Position	Remarks.
		stûpa, on the way to Bettia, in the Champâran District, N Bihâr It is 2¼ miles ESE of Radhia or Rahariya	the miniature reproduced by Foucher (*Icon. Bouddhique*, p 55) the pillar was surmounted by a *Garuda*, or winged monster
5	Lauriyâ-Nandangarh	Near the large village of Lauriyâ, on the direct road from Bettia to Nepâl, 3 miles N of Mathiah, and 15 miles NNW of Bettia, in the Champâran District	'Mathiah' or 'M' (Senart) Pillar Edicts I–VI practically perfect Lion capital slightly damaged by a cannon-shot in Aurangzeb's time (*Frontispiece*)
6	Râmpurwâ	At Râmpurwâ hamlet, and more than a mile NE of Pipariyâ village, about 20 miles NNE of No 5, in same District, 84° 34′ E long, 27° 15′ 45″ N lat Prostrate	Pillar Edicts I–VI well preserved. Bell capital now detached from the pillar, the crowning lion recently found buried at a short distance The 'bull' pillar near is not inscribed.
7	Sânchî	At southern entrance to great *stûpa* of Sânchî, in Bhopâl State, Central India, 23° 29′ N lat, 77° 45′ E long Fallen and broken	Minor Pillar Edict, imperfect, a variant of the edict on the Sârnâth pillar, and also of the Kauśâmbî Edict on the Allahabad pillar The fine capital with four lions lies near
8	Sârnâth	NNW. of 'Jagat Sigh's *stûpa*' at Sârnâth, about 3½ miles N. of Benares Broken	Minor Pillar Edict, nearly complete, being a fuller form of the Sânchî and Kauśâmbî Edicts. The magnificent capital with four lions formerly supported the 'wheel of the Law.' Discovered by Mr Oertel in 1905

K 2

Serial No	Name	Position.	Remarks.
9	Rummindeî	At shrine of Rummindei, about 1 mile N of Padaria, 2 miles N of Bhagwânpur in the Nepalese Tahsil of that name and about 6 miles NE of Dulhâ in the British District of Bastî	'Paderia' (Bühler) Split by lightning, but standing, the bell member of the capital lies apart, but the crowning member is missing The commemorative inscription (Plate II) is absolutely perfect
10	Niglîva	On west bank of Nigliva (Nigâlî) Sâgar, near Nigliva village in Nepalese Tarâi, north of the Bastî District, and about 13 miles NW of No 9, but not in original position Broken	Imperfect commemorative inscription in form similar to that of No 9, and apparently of same year

CHAPTER IV

THE ROCK EDICTS

The Minor Rock Edicts

EDICT I

(The Rûpnâth Text) [1]

THE FRUIT OF EXERTION

'Thus saith His Sacred Majesty [2] :—

For more than two-and-a-half years I was a lay disciple, without, however, exerting myself strenuously. But it is more than a year since I joined the Order, and have exerted myself strenuously. [3]

During that time the gods [4] who were regarded as true all over India [5] have been shown to be untrue.

For this is the fruit of exertion. Nor is this to be attained by a great man only [6], because even by the

[1] The best of the three northern texts; the other two are at Bairât and Sahasrâm. A good impression of the Rûpnâth version has been obtained lately, and will be published soon.

[2] In these documents the title *Piyadasi* is not used.

[3] I follow the interpretation of the numeral words which is adopted by Mr. F. W. Thomas.

[4] 'The gods,' apparently the *devas*, or popular deities. Compare the variation in the Brahmagiri text. But the word may be understood to mean the Brahmans, whom Hindus regard as divine.

[5] 'All over India,' literally 'in Jambudvîpa,' the mythical continent which included India.

[6] 'A great man,' as Asoka; literally 'by (mere) greatness.'

small man who chooses to exert himself immense heavenly bliss may be won

For this purpose has the precept been composed[1] :—

'Let small and great exert themselves"

My neighbours too should learn this lesson, and may such exertion long endure!

And this purpose will grow—yea, it will grow immensely—at least one-and-a-half-fold will it increase in growth

And this purpose must be written on the rocks, both afar off and here, and, wherever there is a stone pillar, it must be written on the stone pillar[2].

And according to this text, so far as your jurisdiction extends, you must send it out everywhere[3]

By (me) while on tour was the precept composed 256 (?) departures from staging-places (or possibly, days spent abroad[4]) '

[1] 'Composed' (*kate*), not 'preached' (*sâvâpite*), as in the Brahmagiri text Compare Pillar Edict VII, sections 3, 4, where Asoka claims credit for having had precepts (in the plural) preached, and a (or 'the') precept (in the singular) composed The reference, I think, is to the precept quoted in this Minor Rock Edict

[2] Six rock-cut copies are known, but no copy on a pillar has been discovered yet

[3] The discovery of the Sârnâth Pillar Edict has cleared up the meaning of this sentence, which was formerly misunderstood

[4] I am fully convinced that the word *vyutha* (in variant spellings) means Asoka himself, not Buddha, or any one else, but the exact rendering of the term is not certain Mr Thomas suggests that in the mysterious concluding words *sata* may be taken to mean *sattra*, halting place,' or 'stage,' and this may be correct He further suggests that the 256 *râtsu* may be rendered as 'days spent abroad' We reject the theory that the figures 256 express a date

THE SAME EDICT

(Brahmagiri Text)[1]

'By command of the Prince and high officials at Suvarnagiri, the high officials at Isila are to be addressed with greetings, and further addressed as follows[2]:—

His Sacred Majesty gives these instructions —

For more than two-and-a-half years I was a lay disciple, without, however, exerting myself strenuously.

But a year, in fact, more than a year ago[3], I joined the Order[4], and since then have exerted myself strenuously During that time, the men, who, all over India, were regarded as true, have been, with their gods, shown to be untrue[5]

For this is the fruit of exertion Nor is this to be attained by a great man only[6], because even by the small man who chooses to exert himself immense heavenly bliss may be won

For this purpose has this precept been preached —

[1] The best of the three Mysore texts The language suggests that these documents were drafted in the secretariat of the Viceroy of the South

[2] The towns named have not been identified Bühler was inclined to look for Suvarnagiri somewhere in the Western Ghâṭs. Isila must have been in Mysore close to Siddâpura The Prince (*ayaputa*=*kumâra*) apparently was the Viceroy of the South

[3] The translation of the numeral words is, I think, correct, but opinions differ

[4] 'The Order' (*samgha*)=the Buddhist Church, or monastic order.

[5] The men referred to are the Brahmans, who are often treated as divine by Hindus The Rûpnâth text, issued probably from the capital, mentions the gods only

[6] 'A great man,' like Asoka, literally, 'by (mere) greatness'

'Let [small] and great exert themselves to this end."

My neighbours, too, should learn this lesson, and may such exertion long endure!

And this purpose will grow—yea, it will grow immensely—at least one-and-a-half-fold[1] will it increase in growth

And the precept quoted above was preached by ? (me) on tour 256 [? times][2]'

EDICT II

(Brahmagiri Text)

SUMMARY OF THE LAW OF PIETY

'Thus saith His Sacred Majesty —

Father and mother must be hearkened to, similarly, respect for living creatures must be firmly established, truth must be spoken These are the virtues of the Law of Piety which must be practised Similarly, the teacher must be reverenced by the pupil, and towards relations fitting courtesy must be shown

This is the ancient nature (of piety)—this leads to length of days, and according to this men must act'

Written by Pada the scribe[3]'

[1] 'One-and-a half-fold,' used idiomatically to mean 'in large measure'

[2] I accept Mr Thomas's view concerning the word *vyutha*, and understand it to mean Asoka himself, who had in the space of more than a year travelled (*rivas*) 256 stages Hindus would consider $256 = 16^2 = 32 \times 8 = 64 \times 4$ to be a 'perfect number' The Sahasrâm text gives the numerals 256 in both words and figures It is impossible to discuss here the various interpretations suggested The historical inferences from the interpretation adopted have been stated in Chapter I

[3] This short document appended only to the Mysore texts of Edict I, differs much in style from all the other edicts, and evidently was drawn up in the provincial secretariat The

THE BHÂBRÂ EDICT[1]

ASOKA'S FAVOURITE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

'His Grace the King of Magadha[2] addresses the Church with greetings and bids its members prosperity and good health.

You know, Reverend Sirs, how far extend my respect for and faith in the Buddha, the Sacred Law, and the Church[3]

compound *lipikarena*, 'the scribe' is written in the Kharoshṭhî script, as used in the Mânsahra and Shâhbâzgarhi texts Apparently Paḍa was a northerner and anxious to show off his knowledge of both alphabets Compare the variant summaries of the Law in Rock Edicts III, IV, IX, XI, and Pillar Edict VII

[1] This edict is so peculiar that it is placed by itself I think that probably it was issued from the Bairât monastery at the same time as the Minor Rock Edict I, of which a copy is close by

[2] Dr Bloch, who has examined the original, tells me that the adjective *Mâgadhe* is certainly in the nominative, agreeing with *lâjâ* (*râjâ*), and not in the accusative, agreeing with *samgham*, as hitherto read We thus see Asoka the King, standing forth early in his reign as Head of the Church

[3] Compare the ordination or initiation formula still used in Ceylon —

'I put my trust in Buddha,
I put my trust in the Law,
I put my trust in the Priesthood,
Again I put my trust in Buddha,
Again I put my trust in the Law,
Again I put my trust in the Priesthood,
Once more I put my trust in Buddha,
Once more I put my trust in the Law,
Once more I put my trust in the Priesthood

(Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p 396)

This is known as the formula of the Three Refuges, or the Three Jewels

Whatsoever, Reverend Sirs, has been said by the Venerable Buddha, all of that has been well said

However, Reverend Sirs, if on my own account I may point out (a particular text), I venture to adduce this one[1] —

"Thus the Good Law will long endure[2]"

Reverend Sirs, these passages of the Law, to wit.—

The Exaltation of Vinaya,
The Supernatural Powers of the Âryas,
Fears of what may happen,
The Song of the Hermit,
The Dialogue on the Hermit's Life,
The Questioning of Upatishya, and
The Address to Râhula, beginning with the Subject of Falsehood[3]—

spoken by the Venerable Buddha—these, Reverend Sirs, I desire that many monks and nuns should frequently hear and meditate, and that likewise the laity, male and female, should do the same

For this reason, Reverend Sirs, I cause this to be written so that people may know my wishes'

[1] Prof Hardy's interpretation

[2] This text occurs in both the *Mahâvyutpatti* and the *Anguttara Nikâya* of the Pâli Canon

[3] Nos 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 have been identified in the Nikâya portion of the Pali Canon (Rhys Davids, *J R A S*, 1898, p 639, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p xiii) M. Senart has printed the text of No 7, and M Sylvain Lévi has translated a Chinese version of the same (*J As*, 1896, Mai-Juin) No 3 has been translated into English (*J Pâli Text Soc*, 1896) It would be interesting to have all the five identified treatises brought together and translated as furnishing a compendium of the ethical teaching favoured by Asoka.

THE FOURTEEN ROCK EDICTS

(*Abbreviations*—D., Dhauli, G., Girnâr; J., Jaugada, K, Kâlsi, M, Mânsahra, Sh., Shâhbâzgarhi)

EDICT I

THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE

'This pious edict has been written by command of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King

Here [in the capital] no animal may be slaughtered for sacrifice, nor may the holiday-feast be held, because His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King sees much offence in the holiday-feast, although in certain places holiday-feasts are excellent in the sight of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King [1]

[1] 'Here' Compare Rock Edict V, where 'at Pâtaliputra' of G corresponds with 'here' of the other texts The word *samâjo* (G), as M Senart points out, is in the singular when it occurs first. I am now of opinion that the prohibition refers to *the samâjo* at the capital, contrasted with certain other merry makings which might be considered legitimate Probably a riotous festival once a year had been customary at *Pâtaliputra*, which Asoka determined to suppress as scandalous The word 'offence' renders *dosam* 'Excellent' is *sâdhumatâ* (G), *srestamati* (Sh) The meaning of *samâjo* is best elucidated by Rhys Davids, who thus comments on the Pâli form of the word, *samajjo* 'In the *Sigâlovâda* there are said to be six dangers in such a *samajjo*, to wit, dancing, singing, music, recitations, conjuring tricks, and acrobatic shows, and in the Vinaya passages we learn that at a *samajjo* not only amusements, but also food was provided, that high officials were invited, and had special seats, and that it took place at the top of a hill This last detail of "high places" (that is, sacred places) points to a religious motive as indulging the whole procedure, Later, the word means simply "fair," as in *Jâtaka* iii. 541., but "fair" is nevertheless a very inade

Formerly, in the kitchen of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King each day many hundred thousands of living creatures were slaughtered to make curries [1]. But now, when this pious edict is being written, only three living creatures are slaughtered [daily] for curry, to wit, two peacocks and one antelope—the antelope, however, not invariably Even those three living creatures henceforth shall not be slaughtered'

EDICT II

PROVISION OF COMFORTS FOR MEN AND ANIMALS

'Everywhere in the dominions of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King, as well as among his neighbours, such as the Cholas [2], Pândyas [3], the Satiyaputra [4], the Keralaputra [5], as far as Cey-

quate rendering' (*Dialogues of the Buddha*, p 8 note, 1899) Mr D R Bhandarkar renders 'convivial gathering,' and quotes authority to show that a *samâja* was a 'public feast' where meat and wine were copiously served *Ekachâ*=*ekatya*, 'in certain places The prohibition was specially directed against the slaughter necessary to provide the meat consumed Elsewhere, a *samâja* without such an accessory might be lawful

[1] K omits 'hundred'

[2] The Chola or Choḍa kingdom on the south eastern side of the peninsula, the 'Coromandel (Chodamandala) coast,' with its capital at Uṛaiyûr, near Trichinopoly

[3] The most southerly Tamil kingdom, roughly corresponding with the Madura and Tinnevelly Districts The most ancient capital was Korkai at the mouth of the Tâmrâparni river, but Madura became the capital at an early date

[4] The Satiyaputra, *scil* king, not mentioned elsewhere A probable conjecture identifies his territory with the Tuluva country, of which Mangalore is the centre, and in which the Tulu language is spoken This region seems usually to have been included in Keraḷa

[5] The Keralaputra, *scil* king, the ruler of Keraḷa, or Malabar,

lon [1], Antiochos the Greek (Yona) king [2], or the kings bordering on the said Antiochos [3]—everywhere has His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King made curative arrangements of two kinds—curative arrangements for men and curative arrangements for beasts [4]. Medicinal herbs also, wholesome for men and wholesome for beasts, wherever they were lacking, everywhere have been both imported and planted. Roots, too, and fruits, wherever they were lacking, have been both imported and planted.

On the roads both wells have been caused to be dug and trees caused to be planted for the enjoyment of man and beast [5].'

EDICT III

THE QUINQUENNIAL CIRCUIT

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—When I had been consecrated twelve years I issued this command:—

separated from Tuluva (?= Satiyaputra) by the Chandragiri river, and extending to Cape Comorin, also known as the Chera kingdom. The most ancient capital was Vanji, Vanchi, or Karûr (Tiru-Karûr), about 28 miles ENE. of Cochin. The traditional three Tamil kingdoms were the Choḷa, Pâṇḍya, and Keraḷa or Chera. Asoka alone adds a fourth, Satiyaputra. The Choḷas and Pâṇḍyas are mentioned again in Rock Edict XIII. The form *Ketalaputo*, a curious variant, in G.

[1] Ceylon, *Tambapamni*. The chronicles of the island have much to say concerning the intercourse between King Devânampiya Tissa and Asoka.

[2] Antiochos Theos, King of Syria and Western Asia (B.C. 261–246), grandson of Seleukos Nikator.

[3] These kings 'bordering on' (*samipam*, G., *samamta*, Sh., &c.) Antiochos are named in Rock Edict XIII.

[4] 'Curative arrangements' (*chikichha*), not 'hospitals,' although hospitals must have been included.

[5] Further details are given in Pillar Edict VII, sec. 5.

Everywhere in my dominions the subordinate officials, and the Commissioner, and the District Officer, every five years must proceed on circuit [1], as well for their other business, as for this special purpose, namely, to give instruction in the Law of Piety, to wit—"A meritorious thing is the hearkening to father and mother [2], a meritorious thing is liberality to friends, acquaintances, relatives, Brahmans, and ascetics, a meritorious thing is abstention from the slaughter of living creatures, a meritorious thing is small expense and small accumulation"

Let the monastic communities also appoint officials for the reckoning, with regard to both the principle and specific instructions [3]'

[1] *Yutâ*='subordinate officials,' understood rightly for the first time by Mr F W Thomas The word is frequently used in this sense in Chânakya's *Arthaśâstra*, and recurs several times in the Edicts, where it has been misunderstood. The *dhammayutâ* (Rock Edict V) were *yutâ* specially appointed for the service of the *dhamma* under the *dhamma-mahâmâtâ* 'Commissioner'=*Râjûke* (Skr *rajjûka*), a high official 'set over hundreds of thousands of souls' (Pillar Edict IV) 'District Officer'=*Prâdesike* (G) 'Circuit'=*anusamyâna*, not 'general assembly'

[2] 'Meritorious'=*sâdhu*, perhaps 'excellent' may be a better rendering

[3] Here too Mr Thomas first seized the correct meaning, but he did not explain the technical sense of *parisâ* (G), Skr *parishad*, which means the five constituent elements of a monastic body, namely, monks (*bhikshus*), nuns (*bhikshunîs*), female pupils (*śikshamânâs*), male novices (*śramaneras*), female novices (*śramanerîs*) But the *parishads* sometimes are reckoned as seven, including the male and female lay disciples (*upâsakas* and *upâsikâs*), and at other times as only four, namely, monks and nuns, with male and female lay disciples Here, as the orders refer to monastic expenditure, the lay disciples probably are not included (See Takakusu, transl of Itsing,

EDICT IV

THE PRACTICE OF PIETY

'For a long time past, even for many hundred years, have increased the (sacrificial) slaughter of living creatures, the killing of animate beings[1], unseemly behaviour to relatives, and unseemly behaviour to Brahmans and ascetics

But now, by reason of His Sacred Majesty the King's practice of piety, the reverberation of the war-drums—or rather, the reverberation of the Law of Piety—is heard, bringing with it the display to the people of processional cars, elephants, illuminations, and other heavenly spectacles[2]

Record of Buddhist Practices, pp. 86, 96, 205) 'With regard to, &c'=*hetuto cha vyamjanato cha*, might be rendered 'with regard to both the objects and the accounts,' i e by checking the stores and auditing the accounts The orders about 'small accumulation' are explained by Itsing's remark that 'it is unseemly for a monastery to have great wealth, granaries full of rotting corn, &c' (op cit, p 194)

[1] *Ârambho*, '(sacrificial) slaughter', *vihimsâ*, 'killing' (Thomas), 'cruel treatment' (Bühler)

[2] The drum of piety takes the place of the kettle-drum (*bheri*) Bühler quotes the expression *dhammabheri* from the *Jâtakas* Religious processions took the place of military pageants. Fa-hien's description of a grand Buddhist procession at Pâṭaliputra, although centuries later in date, is the best commentary. 'Every year,' he says, 'on the eighth day of the second month they celebrate a procession of images They make a four-wheeled car, and on it erect a structure of five storeys by means of bamboos tied together . They make figures of *dêvas*, with gold, silver, and lapis lazuli grandly blended, and having silken streamers and canopies hung out over them. On the four sides are niches, with a Buddha seated in each, and a Bodhisattva standing in attendance on him There may be twenty cars, all grand and imposing, but each

As for many hundred years before has not happened, now at this present, by reason of His Sacred Majesty the King's instruction in the Law of Piety, have increased abstention from the (sacrificial) slaughter of living creatures, abstention from the killing of animate beings, seemly behaviour to relatives, seemly behaviour to Brahmans and ascetics, hearkening to father and mother, and hearkening to elders.

Thus, and in many other ways, the practice of piety has increased, and His Sacred Majesty the King will cause such practice of piety to increase still more.

The sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons of His Sacred Majesty the King will promote the increase in the practice of such piety until the end of the cycle, and abiding in piety and morality, will give instruction in the Law of Piety. For this is the best of deeds[1]—even giving instruction in the Law of Piety—and the practice of piety is not for the immoral man. In this matter to increase and not to decrease, both are excellent.[2]

For this very purpose has this been caused to be written, in order that in this matter, men may strive for increase and not behold decrease.[3]

one different from the others. On the day mentioned, the monks and laity within the borders all come together; they have singers and skilful musicians; they pay their devotions with flowers and incense. The Brahmans come and invite the Buddhas to enter the city. These do so in order, and remain two nights in it. All through the night they keep lamps burning, have skilful music, and present offerings. This is the practice in all the other kingdoms as well.' (*Travels*, ch. xxvii, transl. Legge.)

[1] Compare Rock Edict XI.

[2] 'Excellent' = *sâdhu*, 'meritorious' (Bühler).

[3] 'Behold' = *lochetavyâ* (G.), *anulochayisu* (M.), 'qu'ils n'en voient point' (Senart). Bühler renders more freely as 'permit'.

'This has been written by command of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King after he had been consecrated twelve years.'

EDICT V

CENSORS OF THE LAW OF PIETY

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King.—

A good deed is a difficult thing. He who is the author of a good deed does a difficult thing. Now, by me many good deeds have been done[1]

Should my sons, grandsons, and my descendants after them until the end of the cycle follow in this path, they will do well, but in this matter, he who shall omit a part (of his duty) will do ill[2], because sin is an easy thing[3]

Now in all the long time past, officers known as Censors of the Law of Piety never had existed, whereas such Censors were created by me when I had been consecrated thirteen years[4]

Among people of all denominations[5] they are

[1] See Pillar Edict VII, sec 5, 8

[2] *Desaṁ* = 'a part (of his duty),' Bühler and Thomas. Senart takes it as = *sandesaṁ*, 'commandment'

[3] *Sukaram* = 'easy' (G and Sh) K. and Dh have *supadâlaye*, which Senart renders 'qu'on lutte donc contre le mal', but Bühler translates 'for sin easily develops.'

[4] *Dhaṁma-mahâmâtâ*, superior officers charged with the supervision of the Law of Piety, as distinguished from the ordinary civil *mahâmâtâ*, and vested with the duty of superintending the *Dhamma-yutâ*, or subordinate officials of the Law of Piety, mentioned three times below The correct interpretation of *Dhaṁma-yutâ* is due to Mr. Thomas.

[5] *Pâsaṁdesu* = 'denominations,' translated by the shorter word 'sects' in Rock Edict XII, where the term recurs frequently

employed in promoting the establishment of piety, the increase of piety, and the welfare and happiness of the subordinate officials of the Law of Piety, and of the Yavanas, Kâmbojas, Gândhâras, as well as other nations on my borders[1]

Among servants and masters[2], Brahmans and rich, the needy, and the aged, they are employed in removing hindrances from the path of the subordinate officials of the Law of Piety

They are employed in the prevention of wrongful imprisonment or chastisement, in removing hindrances, and in deliverance, considering cases where a man has a large family, has been smitten by calamity, or is advanced in years

Here, at Pâtaliputra[3], and in all the provincial towns, they are everywhere employed in supervising the female establishments of my brothers and sisters, as well as of other relatives[4]

These Censors are employed everywhere in my

[1] *Yonas*, or *Yavanas*=people of Greek descent, and perhaps including other foreign tribes on the north western frontier, Kâmbojas, a Himalayan nation, Tibetans according to some authorities, Gândhâras, the people of the Gandhâra country, including Peshawar and probably Taxila also, Râshtrikas (not in K)=the inhabitants of Mahârâshtra, Pitenikas (not in K)=the inhabitants of the country about Paithan on the Godâvari Compare Rock Edicts II and XIII

[2] 'Servants and masters'=*bhata-m-ayesu*, with euphonic *m* (Franke), ='soldiers and warriors,' *bhata-marya* (Senart), ='hired servants,' *bhrita-maya* (Bühler)

[3] 'At Pataliputra,' G only

[4] 'Female establishments'=*olodhanesu*, better than the Muhammadan words 'harem' or 'zenana' Compare 'Censors of the Women' in Rock Edict XII Note the mention of Asoka's 'brothers and sisters' as being alive and objects of his care. The functions of the Censors are further explained in Pillar Edict VII, sec 6, 7

dominions[1] among the subordinate officials of the Law with whatsoever concerns the Law of Piety, with watching over that Law, and with the administration of almsgiving.

For this purpose has this pious edict been written that it may long endure, and that my subjects may act accordingly[2].'

EDICT VI

THE PROMPT DISPATCH OF BUSINESS

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—For a long time past it has not happened that business has been dispatched and that reports have been received at all hours. Now by me this arrangement has been made that at all hours and in all places—whether I am dining, or in the ladies' apartments, in my bedroom, or in my closet, in my (?) carriage, or in the palace gardens—the official Reporters should report to me on the people's business, and I am ready to do the people's business in all places[3].

[1] 'In my dominions' (K. and Sh.), 'in the whole earth' (Dh.)

[2] 'Subjects'=*pajâ*, which is used in the sense of 'children' in the special Kalinga Edicts, 'all men are my children.'

[3] 'The official Reporters'=*pativedakâ* = ἐπίσκοποι of Megasthenes, as quoted by Strabo, xv. 1. 48, Frag. xxxii.—'The Overseers, to whom is assigned the duty of watching all that goes on, and making reports secretly to the king. Some are entrusted with the inspection of the city, and others with that of the army. The former employ as their coadjutors the courtezans of the city, and the latter the courtezans of the camp. The ablest and most trustworthy men are appointed to fill these offices' (transl. McCrindle, *Megasthenes*, p. 85). Châṇakya devotes Chapters xi and xii of Book I of the *Arthaśâstra* to the subject of spies. The courtezans were under official supervision (ibid., bk. ii, ch. xxvii). Asoka inherited

And if, perchance, I personally by word of mouth command that a gift be made or an order executed, or anything urgent is entrusted to the superior officials, and in that business a dispute arises or a fraud occurs among the monastic community [1], I have commanded that immediate report must be made to me at any hour and in any place, because I never feel full satisfaction in my efforts and dispatch of business For the welfare of all folk is what I must work for—and the root of that, again, is in effort and the dispatch of business And whatsoever exertions I make are for the end that I may discharge my debt to animate beings, and that while I make some happy here, they may in the next world gain heaven

For this purpose, have I caused this pious edict to be written, that it may long endure, and that my sons and grandsons [2] may exert themselves for the welfare of all folk That, however, is a difficult thing save by the utmost exertion'

EDICT VII

IMPERFECT FULFILMENT OF THE LAW

'His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King desires that in all places men of every denomination may abide, for they all desire mastery over the senses and purity of mind

the system of secret reports, but introduced the innovation of receiving them at all times and in all places, even the most inconvenient His grandfather, however, used to hear cases even while being shampooed (Strabo, xv 1 56, transl. McCrindle, *Megasthenes*, p 72) The exact meaning of the word (*vinitaspi*) conjecturally rendered 'carriage' is uncertain

[1] See Rock Edict III

[2] The translation is from Sh Dh and J have 'sons and great-grandsons,' K. 'sons and wives,' a remarkable variant; but, as Senart observes, consistent with Buddhist notions.

Man, however, is various in his wishes, and various in his likings.

Some of the denominations will perform the whole, others will perform but one part of the commandment. Even for a person to whom lavish liberality is impossible, the virtues of mastery over the senses, purity of mind, gratitude, and steadfastness are altogether indispensable[1].'

EDICT VIII

PIOUS TOURS

'In times past Their Sacred Majesties[2] used to go out on so-called "tours of pleasure[3]," during which hunting and other similar amusements used to be practised.

His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King, however, after he had been consecrated ten years, went forth on the road to wisdom[4]. Thus originated the "tours of

[1] For the rendering 'denomination,' see note to Edict V (*ante*, p. 161). Bühler translates 'creeds,' and Senart 'sectes,' but neither of those terms quite suits the Indian facts, and although 'denomination' is clumsy, I cannot think of anything better. The last clause is in accordance with the view of Mr. Thomas, who renders *bâḍham* as 'altogether' and *nîche* (=*nityam*) as 'permanent,' or 'indispensable,' in contradistinction to *naimittikam*, 'occasional.' Bühler translated 'laudable in a lowly man,' which certainly seems to be erroneous. Senart takes *nîche* (*nityam*) as 'toujours' and *bâḍham* as 'excellent.' Compare Rock Edict XII.

[2] *Devânam-piyâ* and similar forms in K., &c.; *râjâno*, 'kings,' in G.

[3] 'So-called' is omitted from G. The word rendered 'tours of pleasure' (*vihâra-yâtra*) occurs in the *Arthaśâstra* in the form *yâtra-vihâra* (Thomas).

[4] 'Le terme de Sambodhi rattache indiscutablement Piyadasi au buddhisme' (Senart, ii. 264). The technical meaning of the

piety" (*dharma*), wherein are practised the visiting of ascetics and Brahmans, with liberality to them, the visiting of elders, with largess of gold, the visiting of the people of the country, with instruction in the Law of Piety and discussion of the Law of Piety [1].

Consequently, since that time these are the pleasures of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King in exchange for those of the past'

EDICT IX

(*Kâlsî Text*) [2]

TRUE CEREMONIAL

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King —

term is best explained by Prof Rhys Davids (*Dialogues of the Buddha*, p 190, *Buddhism* (1899), p 108) The 'road' on which Asoka set out for 'wisdom' (*sambodhi*) is the 'eight fold path' leading to the state of an Arahat, or perfected saint The person starting on that path is described as *sambodhi-parâyano* The steps in the path are (1) right views, (2) right feelings, (3) right words (4) right behaviour, (5) right mode of livelihood, (6) right exertion, (7) right memory, and (8) right meditation with tranquillity *Sambodhi* is analysed into seven constituent parts, namely, self-possession, investigation into the truth energy, calm, joy, concentration, and magnanimity Asoka definitely states in effect that in his eleventh 'regnal year' (B C 259) he deliberately became *sambodhi parâyano*, a person aiming at the wisdom of the perfected saint

[1] The pilgrimage of B C 249 recorded on the Rummindeî and Niglîva Pillars was such a 'pious tour' Many Indian kings for example, Harsha and Akbar, have taken great delight in disputations on religion.

[2] The various recensions of this edict differ more widely than usual, in substance as well as in language The K, M, and Sh texts form one group, the G, Dh, and J form another The K version is practically perfect

People perform various ceremonies on occasions of sickness, the weddings of sons, the weddings of daughters, the birth of children, and departure on journeys On these and other similar occasions people perform ceremonies But at such times the womankind perform many, manifold, trivial, and worthless ceremonies [1].

Ceremonies certainly have to be performed, although that sort bears little fruit. This sort, however —the ceremonial of piety—bears great fruit [2]. In it are included proper treatment of slaves and servants, honour to teachers, gentleness towards living creatures, and liberality towards ascetics and Brahmans These things, and others of the same kind, are called the ceremonial of piety

Therefore ought a father, son, brother master, friend, or comrade, nay, even a neighbour, to say, "This is meritorious, this is the ceremonial to be performed until the attainment of the desired end" How is that done? for the ceremonial of this world is of doubtful efficacy, perchance it may accomplish the desired end, perchance, on the other hand, it may not, and so it remains of no effect in this world

The ceremonial of piety, on the contrary, is not temporal; for even if it fails to attain the desired end in this world, it certainly begets endless merit in the other world If it happens to attain the desired end in this world, then a gain of two kinds is assured, namely, in this world the desired end, and in the other world the begetting of endless merit through the aforesaid ceremonial of piety [3]'

[1] 'Ceremonies' or 'ceremonial,' *mamgalam*, 'auspicious rites' (Bühler), 'pratiques' (Senart) In the *Jâtakas*, as M Senart tells me, the term is applied to the cult of the Hindu deities

[2] 'Great fruit,' *mahâphale*, is contrasted with 'little fruit' (*apa* (*alpa-*) *phale*)

[3] For the passage beginning 'How is that done?' and extending to the end, G, Dh, and J substitute the following:—

EDICT X

TRUE GLORY

'His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King does not believe that glory or renown brings much profit unless in both the present and the future my people[1] obediently hearken to the Law of Piety and conform to its precepts For that purpose only does His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King desire glory or renown

Whatsoever exertions His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King makes, all are for the sake of the life hereafter, so that every one may be freed from peril, and that peril is vice[2]

Difficult, verily, it is to attain such freedom, whether by people of low or of high degree, save by the utmost exertion, giving up all other aims[3]. That, however, for him of high degree is difficult.'

'And it has been said—"Almsgiving (or 'liberality') is meritorious (or 'excellent,' *sâdhu*)" But there is no such gift or favour as the gift of piety, the favour of piety Therefore should a friend (*mitrena*), lover (*suhadayena*), relative, or comrade advise on such and such an occasion, "This is to be done, this is meritorious (*sâdhu*), by this it is possible for you to gain heaven" And what is better worth doing than that by which heaven is gained?' In that form the passage anticipates Edict XI My rendering is not quite the same as M Senart's. Bühler translated the Sh text

[1] 'My people,' *me jano*, G

[2] 'Freed from peril,' *aparisrave*, Sh G, &c, have *apaparisrave*, where *apa* probably represents *alpa*, 'freed from peril so far as possible' 'Vice,' *apuññam*, the contrary of *puññam*, 'merit,' or 'virtue' Senart translates *parisrave* by *écueil*, lit 'a hidden rock'

[3] This seems to be the correct sense of *savam parichajitpâ*, G, and the corresponding words in other texts (Thomas)

EDICT XI

TRUE ALMSGIVING[1]

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—

There is no such almsgiving as is the almsgiving of the Law of Piety—friendship in piety, the liberality in piety, kinship in piety[2]. Herein does it consist—in proper treatment of slaves and servants, hearkening

[1] Compare generally Edict IX, and especially the G., Dh., and J. text of the latter part of that document.

[2] *Dhammadânam*, 'the almsgiving of the Law of Piety,' means, as M. Senart puts it, 'l'aumône des bons conseils et de l'enseignement religieux,' good advice and teaching in the spirit of the Law. The three following clauses are expansions of the main idea, and explain that such liberal communication of the truth will produce between teacher and taught relations of friendship, kinship (*parenté*, Senart), and feelings such as arise between a benefactor and his beneficiary. Mr Thomas prefers 'association' to 'kinship' as the rendering of *sambandho*.

Compare the account of Niśśanka Malla, King of Ceylon, (A.D. 1187-96):—'This pious monarch enjoyed the bliss of almsgiving, as he sat granting largess with great happiness, hearing many joyous shouts of "*sâdhu*" and the like, and imparting the gift of piety (*dâna-dharmma*), which is the noblest of all gifts' (Inscription on rock near the ruins of one of the alms-houses (*dâna-sâlâ*) erected by the king at Polonnaruwa, in *Arch. S. Rep. Ceylon*, for 1902 (lxvii of 1907), p. 11). Niśśanka Malla bestowed his bounty, like Asoka, on Buddhists and Brahmans, natives and foreigners. Cromwell's first extant letter (dated St. Ives, Jan. 11, 1635) supplies a curiously exact parallel:—'Building of hospitals provides for men's bodies; to build material temples is judged a work of piety; but they that procure spiritual food, they that build up spiritual temples, they are the men truly charitable, truly pious' (Carlyle).

to father and mother, giving to friends, comrades, relations, ascetics, and Brahmans, and sparing of living creatures. Therefore a father, son, brother, master[1], friend, comrade, nay, even a neighbour, ought to say, "This is meritorious, this ought to be done."

He who acts thus both gains this world and in the other world begets infinite merit[2], by means of this very almsgiving of piety.'

EDICT XII

TOLERATION

'His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King does reverence to men of all sects, whether ascetics or householders, by gifts and various forms of reverence.[3]

His Sacred Majesty, however, cares not so much for gifts or external reverence as that there should be a growth of the essence of the matter in all sects. The growth of the essence of the matter assumes various forms, but the root of it is restraint of speech, to wit, a man must not do reverence to his own sect or disparage that of another man without reason. Depreciation should be for specific reasons only, because the sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another.[4]

By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people. By acting contrariwise, a man hurts his own sect,

[1] G omits 'master.' [2] 'Merit,' *pumñam*.

[3] 'Sects,' *pâsamda*, translated by the longer word 'denomination' in Rock Edict VII. 'Gifts,' *dânam*, i.e. 'almsgiving,' as in preceding edict. 'Reverence,' *pûjâ*. Compare Rock Edict IX, and Pillar Edicts VI, VII, sec. 7.

[4] 'Without reason,' *aprakaranasi*. 'For specific reason only,' *tasi tasi prakarane*. 'For one reason or another,' *tena tena prakaranena* or *akarena*. 'Reason,' is used in the sense of 'particular occasion' or 'justification' (*legitime occasion*, Senart).

and does disservice to the sects of other people For he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect

Concord, therefore, is meritorious, to wit, hearkening and hearkening willingly to the Law of Piety as accepted by other people[1] For this is the desire of His Sacred Majesty that all sects should hear much teaching and hold sound doctrine

Wherefore the adherents of all sects, whatever they may be, must be informed that His Sacred Majesty cares not so much for gifts or external reverence as that there should be growth in the essence of the matter and respect for all sects

For this very purpose are employed the Censors of the Law of Piety, the Censors of the Women, the (?) Inspectors, and other official bodies[2] And this is the fruit thereof—the growth of one's own sect, and the enhancement of the splendour of the Law of Piety'

[1] 'Qu'ils ecoutent et aiment a ecouter' (Senart) Compare 'Let every man, so far as in him lieth, help the reading of the scriptures, whether those of his own church or those of another' (Pratâpa Simha, *Bhakta kalpadruma* (1866), transl Grierson in *J R A S*, 1908, p 359) So Miss Noble correctly re presents the Indian view when she writes —'Every one, while recognizing this perfect sympathy of various faiths for one another, should know how to choose one among them for his own, and persist in it, till by its means he has reached a point where the formulae of sects are meaningless to him' (*The Web of Indian Life*, p 224)

[2] The Censors of the Women, mentioned specifically in this document only, are alluded to in Pillar Edict VII, sec 7 The word *vrachabhumika* is of uncertain meaning, and the rendering 'Inspectors' is only a guess 'Official bodies,' *nikâyâ*, a word used several times in the edicts, with slightly varying significations, but always implying a class, body, or community

EDICT XIII

(Shâhbâzgarhi Text)[1]

TRUE CONQUEST

The Kalingas were conquered by His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King when he had been consecrated eight years[2] One hundred and fifty thousand persons were thence carried away captive, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times that number perished

Directly after the annexation of the Kalingas, began His Sacred Majesty's zealous protection of the Law of Piety, his love of that Law, and his giving instruction in that Law (*dharma*) Thus arose His Sacred Majesty's remorse for having conquered the Kalingas, because the conquest of a country previously unconquered involves the slaughter, death, and carrying away captive of the people That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to His Sacred Majesty.

There is, however, another reason for His Sacred Majesty feeling still more regret, inasmuch as in such a country dwell Brahmans or ascetics, or men of various denominations, or householders, upon whom is laid this duty of hearkening to superiors, hearkening to father and mother, hearkening to teachers, and proper treatment of friends, acquaintances, comrades, relatives, slaves and servants, with fidelity of attachment. To such people in such a country befalls violence, or slaughter, or separation from their loved ones Or misfortune befalls the friends, acquaintances, comrades, and relatives of those who are themselves

[1] The Sh text, which is practically perfect, was twice translated by Bühler (*Ep Ind*, vols i and ii)

[2] 'The Kalingas,' or the Three Kalingas, or Kalinga, the province on the coast of the Bay of Bengal between the Mahânadî and the Godâvarî For historical inferences, see *ante*, Chapter I

well protected, while their affection is undiminished. Thus for them also that is a mode of violence. All these several happenings to men are matter of regret to His Sacred Majesty[1]; because it is never the case that people have not faith in some one denomination or other[2].

Thus of all the people who were then slain, done to death, or carried away captive in the Kalingas, if the hundredth or the thousandth part were to suffer the same fate, it would now be matter of regret to His Sacred Majesty. Moreover, should any one do him wrong, that too must be borne with by His Sacred Majesty, if it can possibly be borne with[3]. Even upon the forest folk in his dominions His Sacred Majesty looks kindly and he seeks their conversion, for (if he did not) repentance would come upon His Sacred Majesty[4] They are bidden to turn from evil ways that they be not chastised. For His Sacred Majesty desires that all animate beings should have security, self-control, peace of mind, and joyousness[5]

And this is the chiefest conquest in the opinion of

[1] 'All these &c,' equivalent to Bühler's 'all this falls severally on men' Mr. Thomas prefers 'a share of this falls upon all men'

[2] So Franke.—'"Es kommt nicht vor, dass die Leute nicht irgend einer Sekte anhangen," d h "irgend eine Form der religiösen Gesinnung giebt es in jedem Lande"' Bühler's version is not quite accurate

[3] This remarkable sentiment recurs in the Kalinga Borderers' Edict. Rock Edict XIII was not published in Kalinga.

[4] The last clause is as interpreted by Mr Thomas

[5] 'Joyousness,' *rabhasiye* (Sh.), *mâdavam* (G) 'The fourth point is the joyousness of the Arahat [Buddhist perfected saint], springing more especially from the emancipation of heart to which he has attained, and on which so much stress is laid' (Rhys Davids, *American Lectures*, p. 183). This laying stress on joyousness is a specially Buddhist doctrine

His Sacred Majesty—the conquest by the Law of Piety—and this, again, has been won by His Sacred Majesty both in his own dominions and in all the neighbouring realms as far as six hundred leagues—where the Greek (Yona) King named Antiochos dwells [1], and north of that Antiochos to where dwell the four (4) kings severally named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas, and Alexander [2], and in the south the (realms of the) Cholas and Pândyas [3], with Ceylon likewise [4]—and here too, in the King's dominions, among the Yonas, and Kâmbojas [5], among the Nâbhapamtis of Nâbhaka [6], among the Bhojas and Pitinikas [7],

[1] Antiochos Theos (*acc* c B C 261), King of Syria and Western Asia, grandson of Seleukos Nikator, the opponent and afterwards the ally of Asoka's grandfather, Chandragupta

[2] Ptolemy Philadelphos of Egypt (B C 285-247), Antigonos Gonatas of Macedonia (B C 278 or 277-239), Magas, of Cyrene to the west of Egypt, half brother of Ptolemy Philadelphos, died B C 258, Alexander of Epirus (B C 272-?258), opponent of Antigonos Gonatas The numeral 4 is in the original

[3] See Rock Edict II The Chola kingdom (*Chola mandalam*, Coromandel coast') had its capital at Uraiyûr near Trichinopoly The Pândya kingdom was roughly equivalent to the Madura and Tinnevelly Districts Its most ancient capital was the port of Korkai This Edict does not mention the Kerala and Satiyaputra kingdoms referred to in Edict II

[4] Ceylon,' Tambapamni, or Tâmraparni, the Taprobane of Milton

[5] 'Yonas'=Yavanas=Ionians, people of Greek descent, and possibly other foreign tribes on the north western frontier In later times the term had a vague meaning, like the modern *wilâyati* Kâmbojas, a northern Himalayan nation, believed by some to be the Tibetans

[6] *Nâbhake Nâbhapamtishu* of K, not identified

[7] 'Bhojas, probably those of Ilichpur in Barâr (see Collins, *Geogr Data of the Raghuvamsa*, &c (Leipzig, 1907), p 37) 'Pitinikas,' or Pitenikas, the people of Paithan on the upper Godâvarî Linguistic laws forbid the supposed derivation from

among the Ândhras and Pulindas[1]—everywhere men follow His Sacred Majesty's instruction in the Law of Piety. Even where the envoys of His Sacred Majesty do not penetrate, there too men hearing His Sacred Majesty's ordinance based on the Law of Piety and his instruction in that Law, practise and will practise the Law[2]

And, again, the conquest thereby won everywhere is everywhere a conquest full of delight. Delight is found in the conquests made by the Law That delight, however, is only a small matter His Sacred Majesty regards as bearing much fruit only that which concerns the other world.

And for this purpose has this pious edict been written in order that my sons and grandsons, who may be, should not regard it as their duty to conquer a new conquest If, perchance, they become engaged in a conquest by arms[3], they should take pleasure in patience and gentleness, and regard as (the only true) conquest the conquest won by piety That avails for both this world and the next Let all joy be in effort, because that avails for both this world and the next[4]'

Skr *Pratishthâna* (*Paithâna*) Bühler accordingly proposed a derivation from Skr *Pretâyanika* or *Prâitâyanika* But Michelson objects and derives the name from Skr *pitri* + *ayana*, through an assumed form *pâitraianika* (*Indogerm Forsch*, Band xxiv (1909), p 52)

[1] 'Andhras,' a powerful nation mentioned by Pliny, in the basins of the Godâvarî and Krishnâ (Kristna) After Asoka's death they established a great kingdom stretching across India (see Rapson, *Catal Coins, B M*, *Andhras*, &c, 1908) 'Pulindas,' a term used vaguely for wild hill tribes, here apparently referring to those dwelling in the Vindhya and Satpura hills

[2] Compare Rock Edict II, and the Ceylonese accounts of the missions (*ante*, p 43)

[3] Literally 'by arrows' (*sara*)

[4] Compare note on 'joyousness' above, p 173 Here the word is *nirati*

EDICT XIV

(*Girnâr Text*)

EPILOGUE

'This set of edicts of the Law of Piety has been written by command of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King in a form sometimes condensed, sometimes of medium length, and sometimes expanded, because everything is not suitable in every place, for my dominions are extensive, and much has been written and much I shall cause to be written.

Certain phrases have been uttered again and again by reason of the honeyed sweetness of such and such a topic, in the hope that the people may act up to them [1]

It may be that something has been written incompletely by reason of mutilation of the order, or misunderstanding of the sense, or a blunder of the engraver [2]'

[1] No reader of the Asoka inscriptions can fail to recognize the accuracy of this description of them by their author The existing records are but a part of those originally published, but even what is still accessible amply justifies the description in every particular

[2] In this passage it seems best to translate *desam* as 'order' =*sandeśam*, but it may be rendered as 'a part,' or 'passage' The inscriptions were drafted and incised with such scrupulous care that clerical errors or engravers' blunders very rarely occur, and there is hardly any room for ingenious emendations of the text Most of the errors assumed to exist by the earlier interpreters were imaginary and due to faulty copies.

The Kalinga Edicts[1]

I. THE BORDERERS' EDICT

(*Jaugada Text*[2])

THE DUTIES OF OFFICIALS TO THE BORDER TRIBES

'Thus saith His Sacred Majesty —

At Samâpâ the high officers are to be addressed in the King's words as follows[3] —

Whatsoever my views are I desire them to be acted on in practice and carried into effect by certain means[4]. And in my opinion the chief means for attaining this purpose are my instructions to you

"All men are my children[5]", and just as I desire for my children that they may enjoy every kind of

[1] These two edicts, published in two nearly identical recensions at Dhauli in the Purî District, Orissa, and Jaugaḍa in the Ganjâm District, Madras, take the place of Edicts XI-XIII of the ordinary series, which were not considered suitable for the newly annexed province These documents are often cited as the Separate or Detached Edicts The Borderers' Edict was engraved before that concerned with the Provincials', which Prinsep called No I

[2] The Dhauli text, which is less complete, is addressed to the Prince and high officers at Tosali, a town evidently near Dhauli. The ancient ruins among which the Jaugaḍa record stands presumably represent the town of Samâpâ.

[3] Note the form of address These Edicts try to preserve numerous quotations from the actual words of the sovereign, and consequently present exceptional difficulties in translation

[4] 'My views are,' literally 'I see'

[5] 'All men are my children', an echo of the saying, 'All beings are my children,' ascribed to Buddha, and found in both the *Lotus de la bonne Loi*, p 89, and the *Dharma-sangraha*, II, as quoted by Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p 61 The policy of both edicts rests upon this aphorism

prosperity and happiness in both this world and the next, so also I desire the same for all men.

If you ask, "With regard to the unsubdued borderers what is the King's command to us?" or "What truth it is that I desire the borderers to grasp?"—the answer is that the King desires that "they should not be afraid of me, that they should trust me, and should receive from me happiness, not sorrow." Moreover, they should grasp the truth that "the King will bear patiently with us, so far as it is possible to bear with us," and that "for my sake they should follow the Law of Piety and so gain both this world and the next."

And for this purpose I give you instructions. In this way I am discharged of my debt when I have instructed you and intimated my will, my inflexible resolve and promise.

Now you, acting accordingly, must do your work, and must make these people trust me and grasp the truth that—"The King is to us even as a father; he loves us even as he loves himself; we are to the King even as his children."

By instructing you and intimating my will, my inflexible resolve and promise, I shall have (trained) local officials for this business[1], because you are in a position to make these people trust me and to ensure their prosperity and happiness in both this world and the next, and by so doing you can both win heaven and discharge your debt to me. And for this purpose has this edict been here inscribed in order that the officers may strive without ceasing to secure the trust of these borderers, and set them moving on the path of piety.

[1] 'I shall have (trained) local officials,' *desâ âyutike hosâmi*, nearly equivalent to Bühler's 'superintendents in all countries.' *Yukta* and *âyukta* in the edicts and the *Arthaśâstra* mean 'subordinate official.' M. Senart's rendering, 'exécuteurs actifs de mes ordres' is hardly defensible now.

And this edict must be recited at the beginning of each season of four months, on the Tishya day, and, as occasion offers, it may be recited on a Tishya day in the intervals, even to a single hearer[1] Endeavour by acting thus to fulfil my behests.'

II. THE PROVINCIALS' EDICT

(Dhauli Text)

THE DUTIES OF OFFICIALS TO THE PROVINCIALS[2]

'By command of His Sacred Majesty —

At Tosali the high officers in charge of the town are to be addressed as follows —

Whatsoever my views are I desire them to be acted on in practice and carried into effect by certain means. And in my opinion the chief means for attaining this purpose are my instructions to you, because you have been set over many thousands of living beings that you may gain the affection of good men.

"All men are my children," and just as I desire for my children that they enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness in both this world and the next, so also I desire the same for all men.

You, however, do not grasp this truth to its full extent. Some individual, perchance, pays heed, but

[1] See notes on Pillar Edict V

[2] Edict I deals with the wild border tribes of Orissa, such as still inhabit the Tributary States. This document, addressed to the high officers at Tosali and Samâpâ (see notes on Borderers' Edict), charges them to see that justice is done to the townsmen An appendix is of general application and intimates that the principle of policy enunciated will be enforced throughout the empire by officers on tour. For official tours or circuits (*anusamyâna*) see Rock Edict III.

M 2

to a part only, not the whole. See then to this, for the principle is well established.[1]

Again, it happens that some individual incurs imprisonment or other ill-usage, and when he ends in imprisonment without due cause, many other people are deeply grieved. In such a case you must desire to do justice.

However, with certain natural dispositions, success is impossible, to wit, envy, lack of perseverance, harshness, impatience, want of application, laziness, indolence. You must desire that such dispositions be not yours. The root of the whole matter lies in perseverance and patience in applying the principle. The indolent man cannot rouse himself to move, but one must needs move, advance, go on.

In the same way you must see to your duty, and be told to remember:—"See to my commands; such and such are the instructions of His Sacred Majesty." Fulfilment of these bears great fruit, non-fulfilment brings great calamity. By those who fail neither heaven nor the royal favour can be won. Ill performance of this duty can never gain my regard, whereas in fulfilling my instructions you will win heaven, and also pay your debt to me.[2]

This edict must be recited every Tishya constellation day, and at intervals, on fit occasion, it may be recited even to a single hearer.[3] By such action you must endeavour to fulfil my intentions.

For this purpose has this edict been here inscribed.

[1] 'For the principle is well established,' *suvihitâ pi niti*. The words will hardly bear M. Senart's rendering 'que la règle de conduite *soit* bien etablie.' The principle referred to, I think, is the aphorism 'all men are my children,' on which the imperial policy rested.

[2] The correct interpretation is due to Prof. Otto Franke of Königsberg.

[3] That is to say, once a month, on the day when the moon is supposed to be in the constellation Tishya.

in order that the administrators of the town may strive without ceasing to prevent the imprisonment or ill-usage of the townsmen without due cause [1]

And for this purpose, in accordance with the Law of Piety, I shall send forth on circuit every five years such officers as are of mild and temperate disposition, regardful of the sanctity of life, who knowing this purpose will act in accordance with my instructions [2]

From Ujjain the Prince will send forth people of a similar class for the same purpose, but will not over-pass the limit of three years

The same order applies to Taxila [3] When the officers aforesaid proceed on circuit, then, without neglecting their own ordinary business, they will attend to this matter also, and act in accordance with the King's instructions'

[1] 'Administrators,' *viyohâlakâ*, probably distinct from the *mahâmâtâ*, or high officers, of the preamble

[2] 'Officers,' in the singular in the text, but the following verb 'will act' is in the plural The officers alluded to seem to be the King's Agents (*pulisâ*), or *missi dominici*, the viceroys being empowered to employ similar Agents

[3] Literary tradition represents Asoka as having been viceroy at both Taxila and Ujjain before his accession

CHAPTER V

The Pillar and Miscellaneous Inscriptions

The Seven Pillar Edicts

EDICT I

THE PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—When I had been consecrated twenty-six years, I caused this pious edict to be written[1].

Both this world and the next are difficult to secure save by intense love of the Law of Piety, intense self-examination[2], intense obedience, intense dread, intense effort. However, owing to my instructions, this yearning for the Law of Piety, this love of the Law from day to day, have grown and will grow.

My Agents, too, whether of high, low, or middle rank, themselves conform to my teaching and lead others in the right way—fickle people must be led into the right way—and the Wardens of the Marches act in like manner[3]. For this is the rule—

[1] This Edict, like all the Seven Pillar Edicts, seems to be addressed generally to the subjects of the empire, and not specially to the officials. In this series of documents Asoka puts on record the principles of his government and calls to mind the acts in which he took pride.

[2] Self-examination (*palîkhâ*) is the subject matter of Pillar Edict III, under the name of *paṭivekhe*.

[3] 'Agents' (*pulisâ*), literally 'men,' again mentioned in Pillar Edicts IV and VII, sec. 3, possibly identical with the 'official Reporters' of Rock Edict VI, but possibly distinct. Compare the *missi* of Charlemagne, 'officials commissioned to

protection by the Law of Piety, regulation by that Law, felicity by that Law, and protection by that Law.'

EDICT II

THE ROYAL EXAMPLE

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—

"The Law of Piety is excellent" But wherein consists the Law of Piety? In these things, to wit, little impiety [1], many good deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness, and purity

The gift of spiritual insight [2] I have given in manifold ways, whilst on two-footed and four-footed beings, on birds and the denizens of the waters, I have conferred various favours—even unto the boon of life; and many other good deeds have I done [3]

traverse each some part of his dominions, reporting on and redressing the evils they found' (Freeman, *The Holy Roman Empire* (1892), p 68) 'Fickle people' (*chapalam*)='sinners' (Bühler) 'Wardens of the Marches' (*amta mahâmâtâ*)= *antapâlâh*, high officers guarding the frontiers Compare Charlemagne's *Markgrafen*

[1] 'Little impiety' (*apa-* (for *alpa*) *âsinave*) The meaning of *âsinave*, the contrary of *dhamma*, is exactly defined in the next Edict. It is a technical word, and scholars differ as to its derivation. See Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p 92, and *Buddhist India*, p 296 It is equivalent, as Michelson and Bühler point out, to the Jain *anhaya*, and seems to come from *âsnu* through a form **âsnava* The maxim that 'the Law of Piety is excellent (*sâdhu*)' looks like a *sâvane* composed by Asoka, or it may be a quotation

[2] 'Spiritual insight' (*chakhudâne*). This use of *chakhu* (Skr *chakshus*='eye') is common to Hindus and Buddhists. Compare *dhammadâne* in Rock Edict XI.

[3] 'Good deeds' (*kayânâni*). Compare *kalaṇa-kramasa*= εὐεργέτου on a coin of Telephos A Buddhist loves to think

For this my purpose have I caused this pious edict to be written, that men may walk after its teaching, and that it may long endure, and he who will follow its teaching will do well'

EDICT III

SELF-EXAMINATION

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King —

Man sees his every good deed, and says, "This good deed have I done" In no wise does he see his ill deed and say, "This ill deed have I done, this act called impiety[1]"

Difficult, however, is self examination of this kind[2] Nevertheless, a man should see to this, that brutality[3], cruelty, anger, pride, and jealousy, are the things that lead to impiety, and should say, "By reason of these may I not fall"

This is chiefly to be seen to—"The one course avails me for the present world, the other course avails me also for the world to come[4]"'

of his good deeds. 'Nothing was so calming to a man's soul as to think of even one deed he had done well in his life' (Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*, p 286) See Rock Edict V and Pillar Edict VII sec 8

[1] *Pâpa—deśana* is a regular expression for confession of sin (Thomas) For *âsinave*, 'impiety,' see preceding edict

[2] *Paticekhe*, 'self examination,' seems to be equivalent to *palikhâ* of Edict II

[3] 'Brutality' (*chamdiye*) is Rhys Davids' rendering

[4] 'Also' = *mana* (Michelson) 'The one course,' giving way to the passions, which leads to *âsinave*, 'the other course,' restraint of the passions by the aid of self-examination, which leads to the practice of *dhamma*

EDICT IV

THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMISSIONERS

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—

When I had been consecrated twenty-six years I caused this pious edict to be written.

My Commissioners have been set over many hundred thousands of the people, and to them I have granted independence in the award of honours and penalties in order that the Commissioners confidently and fearlessly may perform their duties, bestow welfare and happiness on the people of the country, and confer favours upon them.[1]

They will ascertain the causes of happiness or unhappiness, and through the subordinate officials of the Law of Piety will exhort the people of the country so that they may gain both this world and the next.

My Commissioners, too, are eager to serve me, while my Agents will obey my will and orders, and they too, on occasion, will give exhortations, whereby the Commissioners will be zealous to win my favour.[2]

For, just as a man, having made over his child to a skilful nurse, feels confident and says to himself, "The skilful nurse is zealous to take care of my child's happiness," even so my Commissioners have been created for the welfare and happiness of the country, with intent that fearlessly, confidently, and quietly[3] they may perform their duties. For that reason, my

[1] 'Commissioners,' a modern official term, seems to be a good equivalent in rank for the *Râjûkas* of Asoka. See Rock Edict III. The *Râjûkas* evidently existed before his time.

[2] Ordinarily the high officers should do their business of exhortation through subordinates (*dhamma yutena*), but occasionally (*kâni*) the Agents (*missi dominici*) might preach themselves. 'My favour,' literally 'me.'

[3] 'Confidently and quietly'=*asvatha—samtam*, an adverbial compound (Michelson).

Commissioners have been granted independence in the award of honours and penalties.

Forasmuch as it is desirable that there should be uniformity in judicial procedure, and uniformity in penalties, from this time forward my rule is this—"To condemned men lying in prison under sentence of death a respite of three days is granted by me."

During this interval the relatives of some of the condemned men will invite them to deep meditation, hoping to save their lives, or, in order to lead to meditation him about to die, will themselves give alms with a view to the other world, or undergo fasting. For my desire is that, even in the time of their confinement, the condemned men may gain the next world, and that among the people pious practices of various kinds may grow, including self-control and distribution of alms[1].'

EDICT V

REGULATIONS RESTRICTING SLAUGHTER AND MUTILATION OF ANIMALS[2]

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—

When I had been consecrated twenty-six years the

[1] 'Self-control' (*samyame*), through the fasting recommended. Observe that there is no question of pardon. Asoka merely grants three days' respite for two purposes, namely, to enable the condemned men to prepare for the next world, and to give their friends an opportunity of practising the Law of Piety by means of fasting and almsgiving.

[2] The reader will observe that the use of animal food is merely regulated, but not forbidden. Specially to be noted is the fact that no protection is given to the cow now held so sacred. The ancient Indians used beef freely. See, for instance, the *Gahapati Jâtaka* (transl. Cowell and Rouse, ii. 94). The regulations must have given plenty of work to the Censors and their assistants, and have afforded much scope for official oppression.

following species were declared exempt from slaughter, namely:—

Parrots, starlings, (?) adjutants, "Brahmany ducks," geese, *nandimukhas*, *geldtas*, bats, queen-ants, female tortoises, "boneless fish," *vedaveyakas*, *gangâpuputakas*, (?) skate, (river) tortoises, porcupines, tree-squirrels, (?) *bdrasingha* stags, "Brahmany bulls," (?) monkeys, rhinoceros, grey doves, village pigeons, and all four-footed animals which are not utilized or eaten [1]

She-goats, ewes, and sows, that is to say, those either with young or in milk, are exempt from slaughter as well as their offspring up to six months of age.

The caponing of cocks must not be done [2]

Chaff must not be burned along with the living things in it [3]

Forests must not be burned, either for mischief, or so as to destroy living creatures [4]

[1] Some of the animals named cannot be identified 'Bats,' not 'flying foxes,' is the correct translation of *jatuka* Bats are eaten by low-caste folk in Bengal, and are considered strengthening diet in Coorg (*Calc Rev*, 1871, p iv) Queen-ants were esteemed as an aphrodisiac 'Female tortoise' is the correct translation of *dudi* 'Boneless fish,' possibly prawns, but in Hesiod the epithet ἀνόστεος is applied to the cuttle fish 'Monkeys' is a doubtful rendering of *okapinda* One species of monkey is considered a great delicacy in Coorg

[2] The caponing of cocks is forbidden because the practice is intended merely to improve the flavour of the flesh, and is not necessary for practical farming

[3] As on a threshing-floor to get rid of vermin

[4] Burma supplies an illustration 'During the progress of the first rise [of the river] some hunters went to one of these islands where many deer were to be found, and set fire to the grass to drive them out of cover, shooting them as they came out' (Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*, p 299)

The living must not be fed with the living [1]. At each of the three seasonal full moons, and at the full moon of the month Tishya (December–January), for three days in each case, namely the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the first fortnight, and the first day of the second fortnight, as well as on the fast days throughout the year, fish is exempt from killing and may not be sold [2].

On the same days, in elephant-preserves or fish-ponds no other classes of animals may be destroyed.

On the eighth, fourteenth, and fifteenth days of each fortnight, as well as on the Tishya and Punarvasu days, and festival days, the castration of bulls must not be performed, nor may he-goats, rams, boars, and other animals liable to castration be castrated [3].

On the Tishya and Punarvasu days, on the seasonal full-moon days, and during the fortnights of the seasonal full-moons the branding of horses and oxen must not be done [4].

[1] As hawks with the blood of living pigeons, a cruel practice still in vogue.

[2] In ancient India, as is still the custom in some rural localities, the year was divided into three seasons, the hot, rainy and cold. The three full moons referred to probably are those of Phâlguna (Feb.–March), Âshadha (June–July), Kartika (Oct.–Nov.). On certain days the moon is supposed to be in the Tishya or Punarvasu asterisms, or constellations. There were four fast days in each month. The close time for fish came to 56 days in the year (Bühler, *Ep. Ind.*, ii. 261–5; Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 99).

[3] Castration is treated as an unholy act, but Asoka could not venture to prohibit it. The practice used to be regarded in Bengal as 'very illegal and disgraceful and not fit to be mentioned' (*Eastern India*, ii. 891). I tsing says that 'the Buddha did not allow even castration' (transl. Takakusu, p. 197).

[4] Branding was treated in the same spirit as an unholy, but necessary act. For the ancient practice in Ceylon see *Ceylon Nat. Review*, 1907, p. 334.

During the time up to the twenty-sixth anniversary of my consecration twenty-five jail deliveries have been effected'

EDICT VI

THE NECESSITY FOR A DEFINITE CREED

'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King —

When I had been consecrated twelve years I caused pious edicts to be written for the welfare and happiness of mankind, with the intent that they, giving up their old courses, might attain growth in piety, one way or another [1].

Thus, aiming at the welfare and happiness of mankind, I devote my attention alike to my relatives, to persons near, and to persons afar off, if haply I may guide some of them to happiness [2], and to that end I make my arrangements [3]

In like manner I devote my attention to all communities [4], for all denominations are reverenced by

[1] That is to say, the publication of pious edicts began in the thirteenth 'regnal year,' B.C 257, the earliest being Minor Rock Edict I, and the next Rock Edicts III and IV 'Giving up their old courses,' a paraphrase of *tam apahatâ*, in Bühler's sense. M Senart renders 'taking away something,' from the teaching 'One way or another, a paraphrase of *tam tam*

[2] This clause expresses clearly the object of Buddhist ethics

[3] This clause has been accidentally omitted in Bühler's version

[4] 'All communities,' *savanikâyesu*, a term of indefinite meaning Compare Rock Edict XIII The renderings 'corporations' (Bühler), and 'the whole body of my officers' (Senart), are too definite Here the word is practically equivalent to the following *savapâsamdâ*, 'all denominations' So the Pâli *Kośa* entitled *Abhidhâna-pradipikâ*, defines *nikâya* as 'an assembly of co-religionists,' *sajâtinam tu kulam, nikâyo tu sadharminam* (Bhagwân Lâl, *J Bo Br R A. S*, xii 408).

me with various forms of reverence[1]. Nevertheless, personal adherence to one's own creed is the chief thing in my opinion[2]

When I had been consecrated twenty-six years I caused this pious edict to be written.'

EDICT VII

REVIEW OF THE KING'S MEASURES FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE LAW OF PIETY[3]

I 'Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King —

The kings who lived in times past desired that men

[1] Compare the opening sentence of Rock Edict XII

[2] M Senart's interpretation Rock Edict XII develops the meaning

[3] This edict, the longest and most important of the collection consists of ten distinct documents, or sections, each prefaced by the phrase 'Thus saith His Majesty,' slightly varied in form Section I recites the failure of former kings to promote the growth of *dharma* In Section II Asoka formulates his resolve to do better, and in Section III he enumerates the arrangements made by him for preaching the Law. Section IV records the erection of pillars, the creation of Censors, and the composition (*kate*) of 'a precept' or 'the precept' (*sâvane*), apparently that of 'Let small and great exert themselves' in Minor Rock Edict I In Section V the sovereign recalls his efforts to promote the comfort of travellers, and adds that such material benefits are of small account compared with conformity to the Law of Piety In Section VI he recurs to the topic of the Censors, and in Section VII treats of the organization of the Royal Almoners' department Section VIII deals with the royal example, the subject of Pillar Edict II; and Section IX extols the ethical effect of meditation, as compared with that of detailed pious regulations, such as those in Pillar Edict V. The final order in Section X provides for the effective

might grow with the growth of the Law of Piety. Men, however, did not grow with the growth of the Law of Piety in due proportion.

II. Therefore, thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—

This thought occurred to me —In times past kings desired that men might grow with the growth of the Law of Piety in due proportion, men, however, did not in due proportion grow with the growth of that Law.

By what means, then, can men be induced to conform? by what means can men grow with the growth of the Law of Piety in due proportion? by what means can I lift up some at least of them through the growth of that Law?

III Therefore, thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King.—

This thought occurred to me —I will cause the precepts of the Law of Piety to be preached, and with instruction in that Law will I instruct, so that men hearkening thereto may conform, lift themselves up, and mightily grow with the growth of the Law of Piety

For this my purpose the precepts of the Law of Piety have been preached, manifold instructions in that law have been disseminated, so that my Agents, too, set over the multitude will expound and expand my teaching.

The Commissioners, also, set over many hundred thousands of souls, have received instructions—"In

publication of the document Thus the Edict deals with nearly all the forms of Asoka's religious activity, the notable exception being that no allusion is made to the foreign missions. If allowance be made for the Buddhistic repetitions, which weary the European ear, the style may be pronounced to be lucid and dignified. The review was issued for general information and takes the form of a direct address by the sovereign, who speaks in his own person.

such and such a manner expound my teaching to the body of subordinate officials of the Law[1]."

IV. Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty:—

Considering further the same purpose, I have set up pillars of the Law, appointed Censors of the Law, and composed a precept of the Law[2].

V. Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King:—

On the roads, too, I have had banyan-trees planted to give shade to man and beast; groves of mango-trees I have had planted; at every half-*kôs* I have caused wells to be dug; rest-houses have been erected; and numerous watering-places have been provided by me here and there for the enjoyment of man and beast[3].

A small matter, however, is that so-called enjoyment.

With various blessings has mankind been blessed by former kings, as by me also; by me, however, with the intent that men may conform to the Law of Piety, has it been done even as I thought[4].

VI. Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty:—

My Censors of the Law of Piety are employed on

[1] Note that in this section the precepts are mentioned in the plural as being preached (*sâvâpitâni*), not composed (*kate*), in the singular, as in Section IV. For Agents and Censors see Rock Edicts V, VI, and Pillar Edict III. 'Body of subordinate officials of the Law' (*janam dhammayutam*). I now agree with Mr. Thomas that this is the right rendering, and not 'lieges,' or 'faithful people.'

[2] The distinction between the singular (*sâvane*) 'precept' and the plurals 'Censors' and 'pillars' seems to be intentional. This observation adds another reason for assigning an early date to Minor Rock Edict I, which enforces 'the precept' apparently alluded to.

[3] See Rock Edict II. I think *aḍhakosikyâni* must mean 'at every half *kôs*,' like Chandragupta's 'milestones.'

[4] 'Has it been done even as I thought' (Michelson).

manifold objects of the royal favour affecting both ascetics and householders, and are likewise employed among all denominations. Moreover, I have arranged for their employment in the business of the Church[1], and in the same way I have employed them among the Brahmans and the Âjîvikas, and among the Jains also are they employed, and, in fact, among all the different denominations

The ordinary high officers shall severally superintend their respective charges, whereas the officers who are Censors of the Law are employed in the superintendence of all other denominations in addition to such charges[2]

VII. Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King —

These and many other high officers are employed in the distribution of the royal alms, both my own and those of the Queens[3], and in all the royal households, both here [*scil* at the capital], and in the provinces, those officers indicate in divers ways the manifold opportunities for charity[4]

[1] 'The Church' (*saṁgha*), the Buddhist monastic order, no doubt including here the lay disciples Compare the Bhâbrâ and Sârnâth Pillar Edicts

[2] The further reference to the Censors, the *mahâmâtras*, high officers or ministers specially appointed to teach and enforce the Law of Piety, shows the great importance attached by Asoka to that institution

[3] 'The Queens' (*devinam*), the principal consorts with the title *Devî*, 'Her Majesty' They may have been four in number, as later in Burma Their sons were the Princes (*Kumârâ*), as distinguished from the royal offspring by other women. See the Queen's Edict. The Second Queen, the Kâruvâkî, the mother of Tîvara, is the only one specifically mentioned. The legends about Asandhimitrâ and Tishyarakshitâ are of no historical value.

[4] This is Kern's interpretation of *tuṭhâyatanâni*, 'sources of

I have also arranged that the same officers should be employed in the distribution of the alms of my sons and of the Princes, the Queens' sons[1], in order to promote pious acts and conformity to the Law of Piety For the pious acts and conformity referred to are those whereby compassion, liberality, truth, purity, gentleness, and saintliness will thus grow among mankind

VIII Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King —

Whatsoever meritorious deeds I have done, those deeds mankind have conformed to and will imitate, whence follows that they have grown and will grow in the virtues of hearkening to father and mother, hearkening to teachers, reverence to the aged, and seemly treatment of Brahmans and ascetics, of the poor and wretched, yea, even of slaves and servants

IX. Thus saith His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King —

Among men, however, when the aforesaid growth of piety has grown, it has been effected by two-fold means, namely, by pious regulations and meditation Of these two means pious regulations are of small account, whereas meditation is superior

Nevertheless, pious regulations have been issued by me to the effect that such and such species are exempt from slaughter, and there are many other pious regulations which I have issued But the superior effect of meditation is seen in the growth of piety among men and the more complete abstention from killing animate beings and from the sacrificial slaughter of living creatures[2]

contentment,' and so 'opportunities for charity' The meaning seems forced, but I have nothing better to offer

[1] The only Prince named in the Edicts is Tivara, but others are alluded to, and tradition names Jalauka, Suyaśas, &c

[2] I follow Mr Thomas in the interpretation of *vihimsā* and *arambho*.

For this purpose has this edict been composed that, so long as sun and moon endure[1], my sons and descendants may conform thereto, and by such conformity the gain of both this world and the next is assured

When I had been consecrated twenty-seven years I caused this pious edict to be written

X. Concerning this His Sacred Majesty saith:—Wheresoever stone pillars or tables of stone exist, there must this pious edict be inscribed, so that it may long endure[2].'

The Minor Pillar Edicts

I THE SÂRNÂTH EDICT

THE PENALTY OF SCHISM[3]

I '[Thus saith] His Sacred Majesty —[Both at] Pâta-[liputra and in the provinces His Sacred Majesty commands the officials that] the Church may not be rent in twain by any person[4] But whosoever, monk or nun, shall break the unity of the Church, shall be

[1] The phrase recurs in the Cave Dedications of Daśaratha

[2] This order does not appear to have been executed The only known text of this document is on the Delhi Topra Pillar, and no copy of any Pillar Edict on the rocks has yet been found

[3] This edict exhibits Asoka in his later years acting as both emperor and Head of the Church His position, as observed elsewhere, much resembled that of Charlemagne.

[4] The tenor of the document shows that it was addressed to high officials, and the lost opening sentence must necessarily have been something like the words supplied in brackets The syllables *Pâta* apparently must belong to the name Pâṭaliputra, the only word in the inscriptions which begins with those syllables.

compelled to wear white garments and to dwell in a place not reserved for the clergy[1].

II. Thus saith His Sacred Majesty:—

One copy of this edict has been posted for your use in your (?) office and one similar copy of it you must put up for the information of the laity, so that the lay folk may attend on each fast-day[2] to make themselves familiar with this ordinance, and on the fast days throughout the year every high official should attend the fast-day service to make himself familiar and acquainted with this ordinance

And so far as your jurisdiction extends, you must send it out everywhere according to this text, and likewise in garrisons and Districts you must cause it to be sent out according to this text[3].'

II THE KAUSÂMBÎ (ALLAHABAD) EDICT

THE SAME SUBJECT

'His Sacred Majesty instructs the high officers at Kausâmbî as follows —

the Way of the Church must not be quitted Whosoever shall break the unity of the Church,

[1] The schismatic was to be 'unfrocked' by being deprived of the monastic yellow robe and compelled to dress in white like the laity, dwelling in some place outside the monastery precincts 'Rend in twain,' *bhetave* 'Break the unity of,' *bhâkhati*, not *bhokhati* as read by some Buddhaghosha declares that after the Council of Pâṭaliputra Asoka actually expelled the schismatics, 'giving them white garments' (*Samantapâsâdikâ*, quoted by Boyer)

[2] There were four fast-days in each month

[3] This last sentence gives material aid to the correct interpretation of Minor Rock Edict I Garrisons or fortified places were under commandants, and Districts (*vishaya*) under civil officers (*vishayapati*), through whom the orders were to be promulgated.

whether monk or nun, from this time forth, shall be compelled to wear white garments and to dwell in a place not reserved for the clergy [1].'

III. THE SÂNCHÎ EDICT

THE SAME SUBJECT

'. . . The Way [of the Church] has been made. . . . Whosoever shall break the unity of the Church, whether monk or nun, shall be compelled to wear white garments and to dwell in a place not reserved for the clergy

For my desire is that the Way of the Church may long endure [2].'

IV. THE QUEEN'S EDICT

THE DONATIONS OF THE SECOND QUEEN [3]

'By command of His Sacred Majesty, the high officers everywhere are to be addressed as follows:—

Whatever donation has been made by the Second Queen, be it a mango-grove, pleasure-garden, charit-

[1] Before the discovery of the Sârnâth Edict the phrase about the Way was misunderstood as referring to a material procession path. It is now plain that this document is merely one of the copies ordered by the Sârnâth Edict to be sent out The substantive command is the same.

[2] The concluding sentence is an interesting variation M. Boyer's attempt to fill up the principal lacuna is too conjectural to be convincing

[3] The position of this document on the column shows that it must be later in date than the Six Pillar Edicts of B.C. 243 The script exhibits some cursive and unusual forms. See Pillar Edict VII, sec. 7, for notice of the high officials charged with the distribution of the Queens' alms

able hostel[1], or aught else, is to be accounted as the act of that Queen All transactions of the kind are [for the acquisition of merit[2]] by the Second Queen, Tîvara's mother, the Kâruvâkî[3]'

MISCELLANEOUS INSCRIPTIONS

CAVE DEDICATIONS OF ASOKA IN THE BARÂBAR HILLS

I The Sudâma or Banyan-tree Cave

'This "banyan-tree" cave was granted to the Âjîvikas by the King's Grace when he had been consecrated twelve years'

II The Visva-jhopî or Khalatika Hill Cave

'This cave in the Khalatika Hill was granted to the Âjîvikas by the King's Grace when he had been consecrated twelve years'

III The Karna-chaupâr or Supiyâ Cave

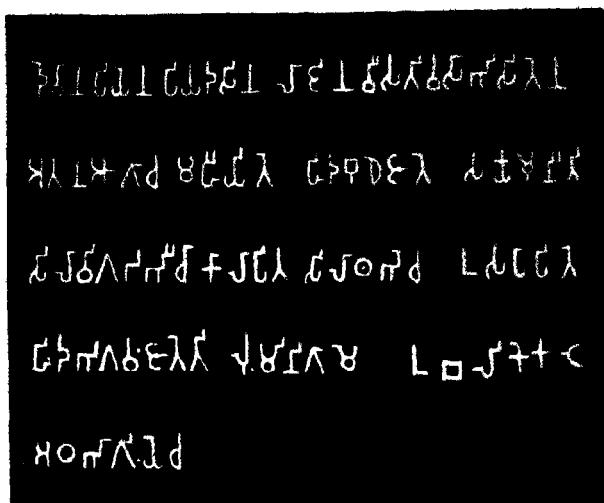
'The King's Grace, when consecrated nineteen years, granted the Supiyâ cave (?) in the Khalatika Hill for as long as sun and moon endure[3].'

[1] 'Charitable hostel,' *danagahe* = *dânaśâlâ* = *sadâvrata*, a rest house where doles of food, and in some cases shelter for a night, are given free to travellers

[2] The meaning of the few missing characters may be conjecturally supplied as in brackets

[3] The names are spelled Tîvala and Kâluvâkî in the dialect of Magadha The Second Queen evidently was in high favour as the mother of a son who might succeed to the throne But he seems to have predeceased his father Most traditions represent Asoka as being succeeded by a grandson Kâruvâkî is a family or *gotra* name, meaning 'of the Kâruvâka race' The Queen's personal name, in accordance with custom, is not stated Other copies of the document may be discovered

[4] For the Âjîvikas see *ante*, p 135 Inscription III has been wilfully defaced and is only partially legible, but the date can be made out

FACSIMILE

TRANSLITERATION

1 Devanapiyena piyadasina lajina visativasabhisitena
2 atana agacha mahiyite hida budhe jate sakyamunîti
3 sila vigadabhicha kalapita silathabhecha usapapite
4 hida bhagavam jateti lumminigame ubalikekate
5 athabhagiyecha

ASOKA'S INSCRIPTION ON THE RUMMINDEÎ PILLAR

From impression taken by Dr Fuhrer]

The Commemorative Inscriptions on the Tarâi Pillars

I. THE RUMMINDEÎ PILLAR

ASOKA'S VISIT TO THE BIRTHPLACE OF BUDDHA

'His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King, when he had been consecrated twenty years, having come in person, did reverence, and, because "Here Buddha was born, the Sakya sage," a great (?) railing of stone was prepared and a stone pillar erected.

Because "Here the Venerable One was born" the village of Lummini was made free of religious cesses and declared entitled to the eighth share (of the produce claimed by the Crown)[1]'

[1] This interesting and perfectly preserved inscription (Plate II) has given rise to much discussion, several of the words in it not being known to occur elsewhere The modern Rummin deî is the ancient Lumbini Garden, the traditional scene of Gautama Buddha's birth The inscription is in the dialect of Magadha, which prefers *l* to *r* The rendering of *mahîyite* by 'did reverence' is in accordance with the opinion of the late Prof Pischel and other eminent scholars Dr Fleet's version depends on his theory of the late conversion of Asoka, which is untenable in my judgement The phrases 'Here Buddha was born, the Sakya sage,' and 'Here the Venerable One was born' apparently are quotations, and the latter is put in the mouth of Upagupta in the legend of the pilgrimage (ch vii, *post*) The 'great railing of stone' seems to me now to be the best rendering proposed for *silâ vigada-bhîchâ*, but no such railing has been found The stone pillar is broken *Ubalike* is best understood as = *udbalika* = free of cesses (*bali*). *Bali* properly means 'religious cesses' *Athabhâgiye* is, I think, to be interpreted as meaning 'entitled to the eighth share of the produce claimed by the Crown' *Bhâga* was the technical term for what we now call 'land-revenue' The distinction between *bali* and *bhâga* is drawn clearly by Châṇakya,

II THE NIGLÎVA PILLAR

ASOKA'S VISIT TO THE *STÛPA* OF KONÂKAMANA

'His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King, when he had been consecrated fourteen years, enlarged for the second time the *stûpa* of Buddha Konâkamana, and, when he had been consecrated [twenty years], having come in person, did reverence, and erected [a stone pillar] [1]'

bk ii, ch xv 'Taxes that are fixed (*pindakara*, i.e. levied from whole villages, *Comm*), taxes that are paid in the form of one sixth of the produce (*shadbhâga*, but the word includes one-fourth, one-third portions, &c *Comm*, and so is practically equivalent to *ashta* (*atha*)—*bhâga*), provisions paid for the use of the army (*senâbhakta*, oil, rice, salt, &c, *Comm.*); taxes that are paid for religious purposes (*bali*, such as taxes of 10 *panas*, 20 *panas*, &c, but not restricted to religious purposes only, *Comm*)' The result of Asoka's visit was that the village, hallowed as the birthplace of the Sakya sage, was declared to be wholly 'revenue-free,' in the sense that it was no longer liable to pay either 'revenue' or 'cesses'

[1] This imperfect inscription, incised on a broken pillar, removed from its original position, and now lying on the bank of an artificial lake about thirteen miles in a north-westerly direction from Rummindeî, evidently stood originally beside the *stupa* of Konâkamana, or Kanakamuni, one of the 'former Buddhas,' who seem to have been honoured long before the Sakya sage began to teach The *stûpa* has not been identified, Dr Führer's pretended identification being a forgery The distinct intimation that in Asoka's fifteenth 'regnal year' (B C 255) the *stûpa* of Konâkamana was already so old that it required to be 'enlarged for the second time' indicates the high antiquity of the cult of the 'former Buddhas.' The predecessor of Konâkamana was Krakuchanda, or Kakusanda, whose birthplace was marked by a *stûpa* to the south of Kapilavastu, and only a few miles distant from that dedicated to Konâkamana The reputed house, or birthplace, of Kâsyapa,

CAVE DEDICATIONS OF DASARATHA IN THE NÂGÂRJUNI HILLS

I. The Vahiyakâ Cave.

'The Vahiyakâ cave was assigned by Dasaratha, His Sacred Majesty, immediately after his consecration [1], to the venerable Âjîvikas [2] as a dwelling-place, for as long as sun and moon endure [3]'

II The Gopikâ Cave

Identical with I, except for the name of the cave.

III. The Vadathikâ Cave

Identical with I and II, except for the name of the cave.

or Kassapa, the last of the 'former Buddhas,' was an old town near Śrâvastî. These facts, reported by Hiuen Tsang, indicate that the cult of the 'former Buddhas' originated in the sub-Himalayan region to the north of Oudh and the adjoining districts

The formula of the inscription follows the model of that at Rummindeî, and both records may be assumed to belong to the same year (B.C 249), and to mark two stages in the one 'pious tour' It is highly probable that other pillars marking other stages still exist

[1] The unusual order of the words, *Dasalathena devânampiyena*, has suggested to Dr Fleet the possible rendering, 'by D, immediately after his consecration by His Sacred Majesty,' *scil* Asoka.

[2] 'Venerable' (*bhadamtehi*) '*Bhadanta* is a title which has never been applied to any members of a Brahmanical school. The Âjîvikas, therefore, could not have been a Brahmanical sect' (Bhandarkar)

[3] This phrase is found also in Pillar Edict VII, sec 9, and in the damaged No. III Barâbar Cave Dedication In later times it became a commonplace in grants recorded on copper-plates

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p 309, facs. and transcript by Bühler, ibid., xix, p. 126. The above interpretations, which are partially erroneous, have been corrected by the discovery of the Sârnâth Edict, 1905, which has been discussed by Vogel, with facs., in *Ep Ind*, viii. 166, Venis, *J and Proc A S B*, 1907, Senart, *Comptes Rendus de l'Acad des Inscr*, 1907, p 25, Boyer, *Journal As*, tome x (1907), p 119 The interpretation of this edict is connected with that of the Minor Rock Edicts, which see For account of the Sârnâth Pillar see *Annual Rep Arch S* for 1904–5, pp. 36, 68.

VIII The Tarâi Commemorative Inscrip[illegible]

Both were ed and transl by Bühler with facs. i[illegible] The Rummindeî inscr has been much discussed[illegible] *J R A S*, 1897, p 4, facs in Pl II of this [illegible] transl by Prof Pischel in *Sitzungsb d kön.* [illegible] *Wissenschaften*, 1903, which is discussed in [illegible] (1905), p 1 Dr Fleet expounds his latest vi[illegible] tional ref) in *J R A S*, 1908, pp 471–98, and [illegible]

IX, X Cave Dedications of Asoka and Da[illegible]

Both were ed and transl by Bühler with facs, in [illegible] (1891), p 361

CHAPTER VI

The Ceylonese Legend of Asoka

The legends related in this chapter and in that [illegible] are related simply as legends, without [illegible] discussion of their historical value[1]

[illegible] THE CONVERSION OF ASOKA

[illegible] king of Magadha, had ten sons, who [illegible] ath ruled the kingdom righteously for [illegible] years. They were succeeded by other [illegible]s, the Nandas, who likewise, in order of [illegible] ruled the kingdom for twenty-two years[2]

[1] [illegible]s have been compiled by combining the narra- [illegible]pavamsa and the Mahâvaṁsa, which may fairly [illegible] both being derived from the traditions preserved [illegible]âra monastery Wijesinha's revised edition of [illegible]slation of the Mahâvaṁsa (Colombo, Govern- [illegible] Office, 1889) has been used His corrections [illegible] version are material For the Dîpavaṁsa, Oldenberg's edition and translation have been used The [illegible] Turnour's Mahâvaṁsa and Oldenberg's Dîpa- vaṁsa [illegible] easy the verification of particular statements. Another summary of the legends will be found in Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*

[2] Turnour omits the words 'the Nandas' The Dîpavaṁsa substitutes Susunâga for Kâlâsoka, makes Asoka to be the son of Susunâga, and omits all mention of the nine Nanda brothers, and their reign of twenty two years (*Dip*, v 25, 97–99). These discrepancies prove the untrustworthiness of the chronicles

A Brahman named Chânakya, who had conceived an implacable hatred against Dhana Nanda, the last survivor of the nine brothers, put that king to death, and placed upon the throne Chandra Gupta, a member of the princely Maurya clan, who assumed the sovereignty of all India, and reigned gloriously for twenty-four years[1] He was succeeded by his son Bindusâra, who ruled the land for twenty-eight years

The sons of Bindusâra, the offspring of sixteen mothers, numbered one hundred and one, of whom the eldest was named Sumana, and the youngest Tishya (Tissa) A third son, Asoka, uterine brother of Tishya, had been appointed Viceroy of Western India by his father On receiving news of King Bindusâra's mortal illness, Asoka quitted Ujjain, the seat of his government, and hastened to Pâtaliputra (Patna), the capital of the empire On his arrival at the capital, he slew his eldest brother Sumana, and ninety-eight other brothers, saving alive but one, Tishya, the youngest of all Having thus secured his throne, Asoka became lord of all India, but by reason of the massacre of his brothers he was known as Asoka the Wicked

Now it so happened that when Prince Sumana was slain, his wife was with child She fled from the slaughter, and was obliged to seek shelter in a village

[1] Not 'thirty four years,' as given both by Turnour and Wijesinha The figure 34 is a copyist's blunder, see commentary quoted by Turnour p lii (Rhys Davids, *Ancient Coins and Measures of Ceylon*, p 41, note)

of outcastes beyond the eastern gate. The headman of the outcastes, pitying her misery, entreated her kindly, and, doing her reverence, served her faithfully for seven years On that very day on which she was driven forth from the palace she gave birth to a boy, on whom the name Nigrodha was bestowed The child was born with the marks of sanctity, and when he attained the age of seven was already an ordained monk

The holy child, whose royal origin was not known, happened one day to pass by the palace, and attracted the attention of the king, who was struck by his grave and reverend deportment King Asoka, highly delighted, sent for the boy, who drew near with decorum and self-possession.

The king said, 'My child, take any seat which thou thinkest befitting' Nigrodha, seeing that no priest other than himself was present, advanced towards the royal throne as the befitting seat Whereupon King Asoka, understanding that this monk was destined to become lord of the palace, gave the boy his arm, and seating him upon the throne, refreshed him with meat and drink prepared for his own royal use

Having thus shown his respect, the king questioned the boy monk concerning the doctrines of Buddha, and received from him an exposition of the doctrine of earnestness, to the effect that 'earnestness is the way to immortality, indifference is the way to death' This teaching so wrought upon the heart of the king, that he at once accepted the religion of Buddha, and gave

gifts to the priesthood. The next day Nigrodha returned to the palace with thirty-two priests, and by preaching the law, established king and people in the faith and the practice of piety In this manner was King Asoka constrained to abandon the Brahmanical faith of his father, and to accept as a lay disciple the sacred law of Buddha.

These things happened in the fourth year after the accession of King Asoka, who in the same year celebrated his solemn coronation, and appointed his younger brother Tishya to be his deputy or vicegerent.

The sixty thousand Brahmans, who for three years had daily enjoyed the bounty of Asoka, as they had enjoyed that of his predecessors on the throne, were dismissed, and in their place Buddhist monks in equal numbers were constantly entertained at the palace, and treated with such lavish generosity that four lakhs of treasure were each day expended One day, the king, having feasted the monks at the palace, inquired the number of the sections of the law, and having learned that the sections of the law were eighty-four thousand in number, he resolved to dedicate a sacred edifice to each Wherefore, the king commanded the local rulers to erect eighty-four thousand sacred edifices in as many towns of India, and himself constructed the Asokârâma at the capital. All the edifices were completed within three years, and in a single day the news of their completion reached the Court By means of the supernatural

powers with which he was gifted, King Asoka was enabled to behold at one glance all these works throughout the empire.

From the time of his consecration as emperor of India, two hundred and eighteen years after the death of the perfect Buddha, the miraculous faculties of royal majesty entered into King Asoka, and the glory which he obtained by his merit extended a league above and a league below the earth.

The denizens of heaven were his servants, and daily brought for his use water from the holy lake, luscious, fragrant fruits, and other good things beyond measure and without stint

The king, lamenting that he had been born too late to behold the Buddha in the flesh, besought the aid of the Snake-King, who caused to appear a most enchanting image of Buddha, in the full perfection of beauty, surrounded by a halo of glory, and surmounted by the lambent flame of sanctity, in honour of which glorious vision a magnificent festival was held for the space of seven days

THE STORY OF MAHENDRA AND SANGHAMITRÂ, AND THE CONVERSION OF CEYLON

While Asoka during his royal father's lifetime was stationed at Ujjain as viceroy of the Avanti country, he formed a connexion with a lady of the Setthi caste, named Devî, who resided at Vedisagiri (Besnagar near Bhilsâ)[1]. She accompanied the prince to Ujjain,

[1] Turnour's text reads 'Chetiyagiri.'

and there bore to him a son named Mahendra, two hundred and four years after the death of Buddha[1]. Two years later a daughter named Sanghamitrâ was born Devî continued to reside at Vedisagiri after Asoka seized the throne, but the children accompanied their father to the capital, where Sanghamitrâ was given in marriage to Agni Brahmâ, nephew of the king, to whom she bore a son named Sumana.

In the fourth year after King Asoka's coronation, his brother Tishya, the vicegerent, his nephew Agni Brahmâ, and his grandson Sumana were all ordained. The king, who had received the news of the completion of the eighty-four thousand sacred edifices, held a solemn assembly of millions of monks and nuns, and, coming in full state in person, took up his station in the midst of the priesthood The king's piety had by this time washed away the stain of fratricide, and he who had been known as Asoka the Wicked, was henceforth celebrated as Asoka the Pious

After his brother Tishya had devoted himself to religion, Asoka proposed to replace him in the office of vicegerent by Prince Mahendra, but at the urgent entreaty of his spiritual director, Tishya son of Moggali (Mudgâlya), the king was persuaded to permit of the ordination both of Mahendra and his sister Sanghamitrâ The young prince had then attained the canonical age of twenty, and was therefore at once ordained. The princess assumed the yellow robe, but was obliged to defer her admission to the Order

[1] This date is given by the Dîpavaṁsa, vi 20, 21.

for two years, until she should attain full age. Mahendra was ordained in the sixth year of the king's reign, dating from his coronation.

In the eighth year of the reign, two saints, named respectively Sumitra and Tishya, died. Their death was attended with such portents that the world at large became greatly devoted to the Buddhist religion, and the liberality of the people to the priests was multiplied. The profits so obtained attracted to the Order many unworthy members, who set up their own doctrines as the doctrines of Buddha, and performed unlawful rites and ceremonies, even sacrifices after the manner of the Brahmans, as seemed good unto them. Hence was wrought confusion both in the doctrine and ritual of the Church.

The disorders waxed so great that the heretics outnumbered the true believers, the regular rites of the church were in abeyance for seven years, and the king's spiritual director, Tishya son of Moggali, was obliged to commit his disciples to the care of Prince Mahendra, and himself to retire into solitude among the mountains at the source of the Ganges.

Tishya, the son of Moggali, having been persuaded to quit his retreat, expelled the heretics, produced the Kathâvatthu treatise, and held the Third Council of the Church at the Asokârâma in Pâtaliputra. These events happened in the year 236 after the death of Buddha, and seventeen and a half years after the coronation of King Asoka.

In the same year King Devânampiya Tissa (Tishya)

ascended the throne of Ceylon, and became the firm friend and ally of King Asoka, although the two sovereigns never met The King of Ceylon, in order to show his friendship and respect, dispatched a mission to India, headed by his nephew, Mahâ Arittha. In seven days the envoys reached the port of Tâmalipti (Tamlûk in Bengal), and in seven days more arrived at the Imperial Court They were royally entertained by King Asoka, who was graciously pleased to accept the rich and rare presents sent by his ally, in return for which he sent gifts of equal value The envoys remained at the capital for five months, and then returned to the island by the way they had come, bearing to their sovereign this message from King Asoka 'I have taken refuge in the Buddha, the Law, and the Order, I have avowed myself a lay disciple of the doctrine of the son of the Sâkyas Imbue your mind also with faith in this Triad, in the highest religion of the Jina, take refuge in the Teacher'

After the close of the Third Council, which remained in session for nine months, Tishya the son of Moggali resolved that the law of Buddha should be communicated to foreign countries, and dispatched missionaries to Kashmîr and Gandhâra, to Mahîsamandala (Mysore), to Vanavâsi (North Kanara), to Aparantaka (coast north of Bombay), to Mahârâshtra; to the Yavana country (on the north-western frontier); to the mountain regions of the Himâlaya, to Suvarnabhûmi (Pegu), and to Ceylon

The mission to Ceylon consisted of Prince Mahendra and five colleagues, of whom one was Sumana, his sister's son.

Mahendra resolved, with the king's permission, to visit his mother and her relations on his way to Ceylon, and devoted six months to this purpose.

He found his mother at her home in Vedisagiri, and, having been received with great joy, was accommodated in the splendid monastery at that place which she had erected[1] The preaching of Mahendra converted Bhandu, a grandnephew of his mother After this event Mahendra lingered for another month, and then with his companions, to whom Bhandu attached himself, rose aloft into the air, and flying, 'as flies the king of swans,' arrived in Ceylon, and alighted upon the Missa mountain.

The first discourse pronounced by the leader of the mission converted the king, with forty thousand of his followers The princess Anulâ, with five hundred of her attendants, desired to enter the Order, but was told that the male missionaries had no power to ordain females, who, however, might be ordained by the princess Sanghamitrâ

The king of Ceylon, after due deliberation, again dispatched his nephew to King Asoka, with instructions to bring back Sanghamitrâ and a branch of the sacred *bo*-tree. King Asoka, although grieving sorely at the separation from his beloved daughter, gave his

[1] The allusion seems to be to the splendid buildings at Sânchi, about five miles south-west from Besnagar.

consent to her deputation to Ceylon, and proceeded with much ceremony to sever a branch of the holy tree

The severance was effected, signalized by many miracles, and the envoys, accompanied by Sanghamitrâ, were dispatched to the port of Tâmalipti, escorted by an army commanded by King Asoka in person

'The vessel in which the *bo*-tree was embarked briskly dashed through the water, and in the great ocean, through the circumference of a league, the waves were stilled, flowers of the five different colours blossomed around it, and various melodies of music rang in the air' The holy branch, thus miraculously wafted to the shore of the island, was received with due honour, and was planted in the Mahâmegha garden, which the king had dedicated to the use of the Order The branch threw off eight vigorous shoots, which were distributed and planted in as many localities

In those days also the king of Ceylon built for Mahendra the Mahâvihâra, the first monastery of the island, and the construction of the Chetiyagiri (Mihintalé) monastery followed soon after

The princess Anulâ, in company with five hundred virgins and five hundred women of the palace, was duly ordained as a nun by Sanghamitrâ, and straightway attained the rank of *Arahat* The king erected a nunnery for Sanghamitrâ, who there abode in peace, until she died in the fifty-ninth year after her ordination, that being the ninth year of the reign of the Ceylonese King Uttiya Her brother Mahendra

had passed away in the previous year, while observing the sixtieth 'retreat' since his ordination

While King Asoka was engaged in the festivals connected with the dispatch of the branch of the *bo*-tree, another mission, headed by his grandson Sumana, arrived from Ceylon to beg for relics to be enshrined in the great *stûpa* by the island king The request of this second mission also was granted by King Asoka, who bestowed upon his ally a dishful of holy relics, to which Sakra, lord of the Devas, added the right collar-bone of Buddha, extracted from the Chulâmani *stûpa* The relics were received with extreme honour, and enshrined with due ceremony in the Thûpârâma *stûpa*, the moment being marked by a terrific earthquake Witnessing this miracle, the people were converted in crowds, and the king's younger brother joined the Order, which in those days received an accession of thirty thousand monks.

THE LEGEND OF THE THIRD CHURCH COUNCIL [1]

When, as has been related, the heretics waxed great in numbers and wrought confusion in the Church, so that for seven years the rite of confession and other solemn rites remained in abeyance, King

[1] See especially Dîpavaṁsa, i. 25, v 55, vii 37, 41, 56–59 The dates do not seem all to agree, but the intention evidently is to place the Third Council in 236, and the Second Council in 118 *Anno Buddhae*, the two intervals of 118 years being exactly equal One of the Chinese dates for Asoka is 118 A B (I-tsing, ed Takakusu, p 14).

Asoka determined that the disorder should cease, and sent a minister to the Asokârâma to compel the monks to resume the services The minister, having gone there, assembled the monks and proclaimed the royal commands The holy men replied that they could not perform the services while the heretics remained. Thereupon the minister, exceeding his instructions, with his own hand smote off the heads of several of the contumacious ecclesiastics as they sat in convocation The king's brother Tishya interfered, and prevented further violence

The king was profoundly horrified and greatly alarmed at the rash act of his minister, and sought absolution In accordance with the advice of the clergy, the aged Tishya, son of Moggali, was summoned from his distant retreat, and conveyed by boat down the Ganges to the capital, where he was received by the king with extraordinary honour and reverence

Asoka, desiring to test the supernatural powers of the saint, begged that a miracle might be performed, and specially requested that an earthquake confined to a limited space might be produced. The saint placed a chariot, a horse, a man, and a vessel filled with water, one on each side of a square space, exactly on the boundary lines, and produced an earthquake which caused the half of each object within the boundary line to quake, while the other half of each remained unshaken Satisfied by this display of power, Asoka inquired if the sacrilegious murder of the priests by the minister must be accounted as the

king's sin. The saint ruled that where there is no wilful intention, there is no sin, and, accordingly, absolved Asoka, whom he instructed fully in the truth.

The king commanded that all the priests in India, without exception, should be assembled, and taking his seat by the side of his spiritual director, examined each priest individually as to his faith. The saint decided that the doctrine of the Vaibâdyavâdin school was the true primitive teaching of the master, and all dissenters were expelled, to the number of sixty thousand[1]. A thousand orthodox priests of holy character were then selected to form a convocation or Council. To these assembled priests, Tishya, son of Moggali, recited the treatise called Kathâvatthu in order to dissipate doubts on points of faith[2]. The Council, following the procedure of the First Council at Râjagriha and the Second Council at Vaisâli, recited

[1] Mahâvamsa, ch. v. The classifications of the Buddhist schools vary much. I-tsing (pp. xxiii, 7) says that all Ceylon belonged to the *Ârya sthavira-nikâya*, which had three subdivisions. Tibetan authorities (Rockhill, pp. 187 *seqq.*) make two main divisions of Buddhists, (i) *Sthavira*, (ii) *Mahâsanghika*. The *Sarvâstivâdin* school was a subdivision of the *Sthavira*, and the *Vaibâdyavâdin* was a sect of the *Sarvâstivâdin*. The *Vaibâdyavâdin* sect again was subdivided into four sections, *Mahîśâsaka*, *Dharmaguptaka*, *Tamraśatiya*, and *Kâśyapîya*. This explains how Fa-hien was able to obtain in Ceylon a copy of the Vinaya according to the *Mahîśâsaka* school (ch. xl).

The legends have probably been much influenced by sectarian bias.

[2] Turnour's translation is corrected by Wijesinha.

and verified the whole body of the scriptures, and, after a session lasting nine months, dispersed. At the conclusion of the Council the earth quaked, as if to say 'Well done,' beholding the re-establishment of religion Tishya, the son of Moggali, was then seventy-two years of age

THE STORY OF TISHYA, THE VICEGERENT

One day, Tishya, the younger brother of Asoka, and Vicegerent of the empire, happened to be in a forest, and watched a herd of elk at play The thought occurred to him that when elks browsing in the forest divert themselves, there seems to be no good reason why monks well lodged and well fed in monasteries should not amuse themselves Coming home, the vicegerent told his thoughts to the king, who, in order to make him understand the reason why, conferred upon him the sovereignty for the space of seven days, saying, 'Prince, govern the empire for seven days, at the end of which I shall put thee to death' At the close of the seventh day the king asked the prince —'Why art thou grown so wasted?' He replied, 'By reason of the horror of death.' The king rejoined, 'Child, thou hast ceased to amuse thyself, because thou thinkest that in seven days thou wilt be put to death These monks are meditating without ceasing on death, how then can they engage in frivolous diversions?'[1]

[1] Compare the legend of Mahendra in chapter vii, *post*

The prince understood, and became a convert. Some time afterwards he was on a hunting expedition in the forest, when he saw the saint Mahâdharmarakshita, a man of perfect piety and freed from the bonds of sin, sitting under a tree, and being fanned with a branch by an elephant The prince, beholding this sight, longed for the time when he might become even as that saint and dwell at peace in the forest. The saint, in order to incline the heart of the prince unto the faith, soared into the air and alighted on the surface of the water of the Asokârâma tank, wherein he bathed, while his robes remained poised in the air The prince was so delighted with this miracle that he at once resolved to become a monk, and begged the king for permission to receive ordination

The king, being unwilling to thwart his pious desire, himself led the prince to the monastery, where ordination was conferred by the saint Mahâdharmarakshita At the same time one hundred thousand other persons were ordained, and no man can tell the number of those who became monks by reason of the example set by the prince

THE LAST DAYS OF ASOKA

The branch of the holy *bo*-tree, brought to Ceylon in the manner above related, was dispatched in the eighteenth year of the reign of Asoka the Pious, and planted in the Mahâmeghavana garden in Ceylon

In the twelfth year after that event, Asandhimitrâ,

the beloved queen of Asoka, who had shared his devotion to Buddhism, died. In the fourth year after her decease, the king, prompted by sensual passion, raised the princess Tishyarakshitâ to the dignity of queen-consort She was young and vain, and very sensible of her personal charms The king's devotion to the *bo*-tree seemed to her to be a slight to her attractions, and in the fourth year after her elevation her jealousy induced her to make an attempt to destroy the holy tree by art magic. The attempt failed In the fourth year after that event, King Asoka the Pious fulfilled the lot of mortality, having reigned thirty-seven years[1]

[1] Compare the legend of the 'Dotage of Asoka' in chapter vii, *post* According to the Tibetan tradition, Asoka reigned for fifty-four years (Rockhill, p 233)

CHAPTER VII

The Indian Legends of Asoka

THE LINEAGE AND FAMILY OF ASOKA

(1) King Bimbisâra reigned at Râjagriha. His son was (2) Ajâtasatru, whose son was (3) Udayibhadra, whose son was (4) Munda, whose son was (5) Kâkavarnin, whose son was (6) Sahâlin, whose son was (7) Tulakuchi, whose son was (8) Mahâmandala, whose son was (9) Prasenajit, whose son was (10) Nanda, whose son was (11) Bindusâra

King Bindusâra reigned at Pâtaliputra, and had a son named Susîma.

A certain Brahman of Champâ had a lovely daughter. A prophecy declared that she was destined to be the mother of two sons, of whom one would become universal monarch, and the other would attain the goal of the life of a recluse The Brahman, seeking the fulfilment of the prophecy, succeeded in introducing his daughter into the palace, but the jealousy of the queens debarred her from the royal embraces, and assigned to

[1] The genealogy as given in the text is from the prose *Asokâvadâna* in the *Divyâvadâna* (Burnouf, *Introduction*, pp 319 *seqq.*). The reader will observe that Chandragupta is omitted, and that Bindusâra, the father of Asoka, is represented as being the son of Nanda. The metrical *Asokâvadâna* (Râjendralâla Mitra, *Nepalese Buddhist Literature*, pp 6-17) substitutes Mahîpâla for Ajâtasatru, and exhibits other minor variations

her the menial duties of a barber After some time the girl managed to explain to the king that she was no barber, but the daughter of a Brahman When the king understood that she belonged to a caste with a member of which he could honourably consort, he at once took her into favour and made her chief queen. In due course, the Brahman's daughter, whose name was Subhadrângî, bore to the king two sons, the elder named Asoka, and the younger named Vigatâsoka.

The ascetic Pingala Vatsâjiva, when consulted by King Bindusâra concerning the destiny of the two boys, feared to tell his sovereign the truth, because Asoka was rough-looking and displeasing in the sight of his father, but he frankly told Queen Subhadrângî that her son Asoka was destined for the throne

It came to pass that King Bindusâra desired to besiege Taxila, which was in rebellion The king ordered his despised son Asoka to undertake the siege, and yet would not supply him with chariots or the needful munitions of war Ill-supplied as he was, the prince obediently started to carry out the king's orders, whereupon the earth opened, and from her bosom supplied all his wants. When Asoka with his army approached Taxila, the citizens came forth to meet him, protesting that their quarrel was only with oppressive ministers, not with the king or the king's son Taxila and the kingdom of the Svasas made their submission to the prince, who in due course returned to the capital

It came to pass that one day Prince Susîma, the king's eldest son, was coming into the palace from the garden when he playfully threw his glove at the head of the prime minister Khallâtaka. The minister was deeply offended, and from that day engaged in a conspiracy with five hundred privy councillors to exclude Susîma, and to place Asoka on the throne.

The people of Taxila again revolted, and Prince Susîma, who was deputed to reduce them to obedience, failed in his task. King Bindusâra, who was then old and ill, desired to send Asoka to Taxila, and to recall Susîma, that he might take up the succession

The ministers, however, contrived to exclude the elder prince, and to secure the throne for Asoka, on whose head the gods themselves placed the crown, at the moment when his father expired. Susîma marched against Pâtaliputra, to assert his rights and expel the usurper, but Asoka and his minister Râdhagupta obtained the services of naked giants, who successfully guarded the gates, and by stratagem Susîma was inveigled, so that he fell into a ditch full of burning fuel, and there miserably perished

THE TYRANNY AND CONVERSION OF ASOKA

One day, when five hundred of his ministers ventured to resist the royal will, Asoka, transported with rage, drew his sword, and with his own hand cut off the heads of all the offenders.

Another day, the women of the palace, whom Asoka's rough features failed to please, mocked him by breaking off the leaves of an *asoka* tree in the garden. The king, when he heard of the incident, caused five hundred women to be burnt alive

The ministers, horrified at these acts of cruelty, entreated the king not to defile his royal hands with blood, but to appoint an executioner to carry out sentences

The king accepted this advice, and a man named Chandagirika—a wretch of unexampled cruelty, who loved to torture animals, and had slain his father and mother—was sought out and appointed Chief Executioner For his use the king caused to be built a prison, which had a most attractive exterior, so that men might be tempted to enter it, and thus suffer all the tortures of hell which awaited them within; for the king had commanded that no man who entered this prison should leave it alive.

One day, a holy ascetic named Bâlapandita[1] unwittingly entered the gate, and was instantly seized by the jailer The holy man, though given seven days' respite, was at the end of the term of grace ruthlessly cast into a seething cauldron of filth, beneath which a great fire was kindled. The cruel jailer, looking in, beheld the saint, seated on a lotus, and unscathed by fire The miracle having been reported to the palace, the king himself came to see it, and being converted by the sight and the preaching

[1] Samudra in the metrical version.

of the holy man, embraced the true religion and forsook the paths of wickedness.

The prison was demolished, and the jailer was burnt alive

The above legend from the *Asokâvadâna*, which is given with further details by Hiuen Tsang (Beal, ii 86), places the 'prison' or 'hell' at Pâtaliputra the capital

Another form of the legend, which is merely referred to by Hiuen Tsang without comment, places the 'hell' at Ujjain in Mâlwa (Beal, ii 271).

The conversion of the king, according to Hiuen Tsang, was due to the great saint Upagupta, whom he met after the destruction of the 'hell' With the aid of Upagupta, King Asoka summoned the genii and commanded them to build *stûpas* throughout the land for the reception of the relics of Buddha's body, which had been taken out of the eight *stûpas* where they had originally been enshrined after the cremation of the Sâkya sage At the moment of a solar eclipse the genii, in obedience to the commands of the king and the saint, simultaneously deposited the relics in all the *stûpas*.

The *Avadâna* story is that when King Asoka desired to distribute the sacred relics of the body of Buddha among the eighty-four thousand *stûpas* erected by himself, he opened the *Stûpa* of the Urn, wherein King Ajâtasatru had enshrined the cremation relics collected from seven of the eight original *stûpas* The eighth, that at Râmagrâma, was defended by the

guardian Nâgas, who would not allow it to be opened. The relics thus withdrawn from the *Stûpa* of the Urn were distributed among eighty-four thousand *stûpas*, 'resplendent as the autumn clouds,' which were erected in a single day by the descendant of the Mauryas 'The worshipful, the fortunate Maurya caused the erection of all these *stûpas* for the benefit of created beings, formerly he was called on earth Asoka the Wicked, but this good work has earned for him the name of Asoka the Pious[1]'

The metrical *Avadâna* is still more extravagant than the prose form of the tale, and alleges that 3.510 millions of *stûpas* were erected at the request of the people of Taxila, and that ten millions were erected by the Yakshas on the shores of the sea.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF ASOKA

Having erected the eighty-four thousand *stûpas*, King Asoka expressed a desire to visit the holy places of his religion By the advice of his counsellors he sent for the saint Upagupta, son of Gupta the perfumer Upagupta had been in accordance with prophecy born a century after the death of Buddha, and, when summoned by the king, was dwelling on Mount Urumunda in the Natabhatika forest near Mathurâ

The saint accepted the royal invitation, and, accom-

[1] This passage proves that the hero of the *Asokâvadâna* is Asoka Maurya

panied by eighteen thousand holy men, travelled in state by boat down the Jumna and Ganges to Pâtaliputra, where he was received with the utmost reverence and honour[1]

The king said: 'I desire to visit all the places where the Venerable Buddha stayed, to do honour unto them, and to mark each with an enduring memorial for the instruction of the most remote posterity.' The saint approved of the project, and undertook to act as guide. Escorted by a mighty army the monarch visited all the holy places in order.

The first place visited was the Lumbini Garden Here Upagupta said· 'In this spot, great king, the Venerable One was born[2]', and added 'Here is the first monument consecrated in honour of the Buddha, the sight of whom is excellent Here, the moment after his birth, the recluse took seven steps upon the ground.'

The king bestowed a hundred thousand gold pieces on the people of the place, and built a *stûpa* He then passed on to Kapilavastu

The royal pilgrim next visited the Bodhi-tree at Bodh Gayâ, and there also gave a largess of a hundred thousand gold pieces, and built a *chaitya*. Rishipatana (Sârnâth) near Benares, where Gautama had 'turned the wheel of the law,' and Kusinagara, where the Teacher had passed away, were also visited

[1] Compare the story of Tishya, son of Moggali, in the 'Legend of the Third Church Council' in chapter vi, p. 215, above.

[2] Compare the Rummindei pillar inscription in chapter v.

with similar observances At Srâvastî the pilgrims did reverence to the Jetavana monastery, where Gautama had so long dwelt and taught, and to the *stûpas* of his disciples, Sâriputra, Maudgalâyana, and Mahâ Kâsyapa But when the king visited the *stûpa* of Vakkula, he gave only one copper coin, inasmuch as Vakkula had met with few obstacles in the path of holiness, and had done little good to his fellow creatures At the *stûpa* of Ânanda, the faithful attendant of Gautama, the royal gift amounted to six million gold pieces

THE STORY OF VÎTÂSOKA

Vitâsoka, the king's brother[1], was an adherent of the Tîrthyas, who reproached the Buddhist monks as being men who loved pleasure and feared pain Asoka's efforts to convert his brother were met by the retort that the king was merely a tool in the hands of the monks The king therefore resolved to effect his brother's conversion by stratagem

At his instigation the ministers tricked Vîtâsoka into the assumption of the insignia of royalty. The king when informed of what had happened feigned great anger, and threatened his brother with instant death Ultimately he was persuaded to grant the offender seven days' respite, and to permit him to exercise sovereign power during those seven days During this period the fear of death so wrought upon

[1] Vitâsoka = Vigatâsoka.

the mind of Vitâsoka that he embraced the doctrine of Buddha, in which he was instructed by the holy Sthavira Yasas. With difficulty the king was persuaded by the Sthavira Yasas[1] to grant to his brother permission to become a monk. In order to initiate the novice gradually into the habits of the life of a mendicant friar, Asoka prepared a hermitage for him within the palace grounds From this hermitage Vitâsoka withdrew, first to the Kukkutârâma monastery, and afterwards to Videha (Tirhût), where he attained to the rank of a saint (*arahat*) When Vitâsoka, clad in rags, returned to the palace, he was received with great honour, and was induced to exhibit his supernatural powers He then again withdrew to a distant retreat beyond the frontier, where he fell ill Asoka sent him medicine, and he recovered.

In those days it happened that a devoted adherent of the Brahman ascetics threw down and broke a statue of Buddha at Pundra Vardhana in Bengal As a penalty for the sacrilege eighteen thousand inhabitants of that city were massacred in one day by order of Asoka. Some time after another fanatic at Pâtaliputra similarly overthrew a statue of Buddha. The persons concerned, with all their relatives and friends, were

[1] The Ceylonese Mahâvamsa (ch iv) represents the Sthavira Yasas (Yaso) as a leading personage at the Second or Vaisâli Council in the reign of Kâlâsoka, or Asoka I This fact is one of the many indications that Kâlâsoka is a fiction, and that no reliance can be placed on the accounts of any of the three church councils

burned alive, and the king placed the price of a *dinâra* on the head of every Brahmanical ascetic

Now, when the proclamation was published Vîtâsoka, clad in his beggar's garb, happened to be lodging for the night in the hut of a cowherd. The good wife, seeing the unkempt and dishevelled appearance of her guest, was convinced that he must be one of the proclaimed ascetics, and persuaded her husband to slay him in order to earn the reward The cowherd carried his victim's head to the king, who was horrified at the sight, and was persuaded by his ministers to revoke the proclamation Not only did he revoke the cruel proclamation, but he gave the world peace by ordaining that henceforth no one should be put to death [1]

In Fa-hien's version of the legend the brother of the king is anonymous The pilgrim tells us that the younger brother of King Asoka lived the life of a recluse on the Vulture's Peak hill near Râjagriha, where he had attained to the rank of a saint (*arhat*) The king invited the recluse to the palace, but the invitation was declined. The king then promised that if his brother would accept the invitation, he would make a hill for him inside the city 'Then the king, providing all sorts of meat and drink, invited the genii, and addressed them thus. "I beg you to accept my invitation for to-morrow; but as there are no seats, I must request you each to bring

[1] The inscriptions prove that Asoka did not abolish capital punishment.

his own." On the morrow the great genii came, each one bringing with him a great stone, four or five paces square. After the feast, he deputed the genii to pile up their seats, and make a great stone mountain, and at the base of the mountain with five great square stones to make a rock chamber, in length about 35 feet, and in breadth 22 feet, and in height 71 feet or so.'

The same story is told by Hiuen Tsang in order to explain the origin of the stone dwelling which was still to be seen at Pâtaliputra in the seventh century A. D.[1] The name of Mahendra is given to the hermit-prince by Hiuen Tsang, who relates of him a legend, which may be compared with that of Vîtâsoka. The two stories have some points in common.

THE STORY OF MAHENDRA, AND THE CONVERSION OF CEYLON

King Asoka early in his reign had a half-brother, the son of his mother, who was younger than the king, and belonged to a noble family The young man was extravagant, wasteful, and cruel in disposition. In his dress also he aped the royal costume.

The indignation of the people became so great that the ministers ventured to remonstrate with the king,

[1] Beal, ii. 91. Major Waddell identifies Mahendra's Hill with the Bhikhna Pahârî at Patna, on which the Nawâb's palace stands, and states that the neighbouring *muhalla*, or ward, is called Mahendru

and to say. 'Your majesty's brother in his pride assumes a dignity beyond his due. When the government is impartial, the subjects are contented, when the subjects are content, the sovereign is at peace. We desire that you should preserve the principles of government handed down to us by our fathers, and that you should deliver to justice the men who seek to change those principles'

Then King Asoka, weeping, addressed his brother and said 'I have inherited from my ancestors the duty of protecting my people, how is it that you, my own brother, have forgotten my affection and kindness? It is impossible for me at the very beginning of my reign to disregard the laws. If I punish you, I dread the resentment of my ancestors, if I pass over your transgressions, I dread the ill opinion of my people'

The prince, bowing his head, admitted his error, and begged for nothing more than a respite of seven days[1] The king granted this request, and threw his brother into a dark dungeon, though he provided him with exquisite food and all other luxuries At the end of the first day the guard cried out to the prisoner 'One day has gone, six days are left' By the time the sixth day had expired, the prisoner's repentance and discipline were complete He attained at once to the rank of a saint (*arahat*), and feeling conscious of miraculous powers, ascended into the air.

[1] Compare the Ceylonese 'Story of Tishya, the Vicegerent' in chapter vi, p 218, above

Asoka went in person to the dungeon, and told his brother that having now, contrary to expectation, attained the highest degree of holiness he might return to his place Mahendra replied that he had lost all taste for the pleasures of the world, and desired to live in solitude Asoka consented, but pointed out that it was unnecessary for the prince to retire to the mountains, as a hermitage could be constructed at the capital The king then caused the genii to build a stone house, as already related

Mahendra, after his conversion, journeyed to the south of India, and built a monastery in the delta of the Kâveri (Cauvery), of which the ruins were still visible a thousand years later[1]

He is also related to have made use of his supernatural powers to pass through the air to Ceylon, in which island he spread the knowledge of the true law, and widely diffused the doctrine bequeathed to his disciples by the Master. From the time of Mahendra, the people of Ceylon, who had been addicted to a corrupt form of religion, forsook their ancient errors and heartily accepted the truth. The conversion of Ceylon, according to Hiuen Tsang, took place one hundred years after the death of Buddha[2]

[1] Beal, ii 231.

[2] Beal, ii. 246. Compare the legends of the Mahâvaṁsa and Dîpavaṁsa Hiuen Tsang, like the *Asokâvadâna*, placed Asoka Maurya a century after Buddha, the date assigned by the Ceylonese legend to Kâlâsoka.

THE STORY OF KUNÂLA

In the seventh century A D. pilgrims were shown a *stûpa* at Taxila, which was said to have been built by Asoka to mark the spot where the eyes of his beloved son Kunâla were torn out The story of Kunâla is to the following effect

After the death of his faithful consort Asandhimitrâ, King Asoka, late in life, married Tishyarakshitâ, a dissolute and unprincipled young woman. She cast amorous glances on her stepson Kunâla, her worthy predecessor's son, who was famous for the beauty of his eyes The virtuous prince rejected with horror the advances made by his stepmother, who then became filled with 'the spite of contemned beauty[1],' and changed her hot love into bitter hate. In pursuance of a deep-laid scheme for the destruction of him who by his virtue had put her vice to shame, the queen with honied words persuaded the king to depute Kunâla to the government of distant Taxila

The prince obediently accepted the honourable commission, and when departing was warned by his father to verify orders received, which, if genuine, would be sealed with an impression of the king's teeth[2] The queen bided her time, with ever-growing

[1] *Spretae iniuria formae* (Vergil).

[2] Mr Beal has cited an exact English parallel in the verses describing the gift of lands to the Rawdon family, as quoted in Burke's *Peerage*, s v Hastings —

hatred. After the lapse of some months she wrote a dispatch, addressed to the viceroy's ministers at Taxila, directing them immediately on receipt of the orders to put out the eyes of the viceroy, Prince Kunāla, to lead him and his wife into the mountains, and to there leave them to perish.

She sealed the dispatch with royal red wax, and, when the king was asleep, furtively stamped the wax with the impression of his teeth, and sent off the orders with all speed to Taxila. The ministers who received the orders knew not what to do The prince, noticing their confusion, compelled them to explain The ministers wished to compromise by detaining the prince in custody, pending a reference to the capital. But the prince would not permit of any delay, and said. 'My father, if he has ordered my death, must be obeyed, and the seal of his teeth is a sure sign of the correctness of the orders No mistake is possible' He then commanded an outcaste wretch to pluck out his eyes. The order was obeyed, and the prince, accompanied by his faithful wife, wandered forth in sightless misery to beg his bread.

In the course of their weary wanderings they arrived at Pātaliputra. 'Alas,' cried the blind man, 'what

'I, William, king, the third of my reign,
Give to Paulyn Rawdon, Hope and Hopetowne,

* * *

And in token that this thing is sooth,
I bit the whyt wax with my tooth.
Before Meg, Mawd, and Margery,
And my third son Henry.' (*Ind. Ant* ix 86.)

pain I suffer from cold and hunger I was a prince; I am a beggar. Would that I could make myself known, and get redress for the false accusations brought against me' He managed to penetrate into an inner court of the palace, where he lifted up his voice and wept, and, to the sound of a lute, sang a song full of sadness

The king in an upper chamber heard the strains, and thinking that he recognized the voice and touch as those of his son, sent for the minstrel. The king, when he beheld his sightless son, was overwhelmed with grief, and inquired by whose contrivance all this misery had come about. The prince humbly replied 'In truth, for lack of filial piety I have thus been punished by Heaven On such and such a day suddenly came a loving order, and I, having no means of excusing myself, dared not shrink from the punishment'

The king, knowing in his heart that Queen Tishyarakshitâ was guilty of the crime, without further inquiry caused her to be burnt alive, and visited with condign punishment every person, high or low, who had any share in the outrage The officials were some dismissed, some banished, some executed The common people were, according to one account, massacred, and, according to another, transported across the Himâlayas to the deserts of Khotan[1]

[1] Beal, i 143, ii 310, Burnouf, p 360 Compare the wild Tibetan legends about the introduction of Buddhism into Khotân in Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, pp 232 *seqq* These

In those days a great saint named Ghosha dwelt in the monastery by the holy tree of Mahâbodhi. To him the king brought Kunâla, and prayed that his son might receive his sight The saint commanded that on the morrow a great congregation should assemble to hear his preaching of the Law, and that each person should bring a vessel to receive his tears A vast multitude of men and women assembled, and there was not one of those who heard the sermon but was moved to tears, which fell into the vessels provided

The saint collected the tears in a golden vase, and said these words. 'The doctrine which I have expounded is the most mysterious of Buddha's teaching, if that exposition is not true, if there is error in what I have said, then let things remain as they are, but, if what I have said is true and free from error, let this man, after washing his eyes with these tears, receive his sight.'

Whereupon Kunâla washed in the tears and received his sight.

A STORY OF TISHYARAKSHITÂ

Tishyarakshitâ, queen of King Asoka, in pursuance of her incestuous passion for her stepson, Prince Kunâla, who repulsed her advances, resolved to avenge herself, and, in order to accomplish her purpose, took advan-

legends mention the saint Yasas as the minister of Asoka the Pious The story of Kunâla is folklore. Compare the legend of Phaedra and Hippolytus, and Jâtaka No. 472 (*Mahâpaduma*) in the translation by Mr Rouse, who cites other Indian parallels (vol iv, p. 117)

tage of the king's sufferings from a dangerous and apparently incurable disease, to acquire complete control over his mind, and for some days she was granted unrestrained use of the sovereign power.

Asoka, believing his malady to be incurable, gave the order 'Send for Kunâla, I wish to place him on the throne What use is life to me?' Tishyarakshitâ hearing these words, thought to herself. 'If Kunâla ascends the throne, I am lost' Accordingly she said to King Asoka 'I undertake to restore you to health, but a necessary condition is that you forbid all physicians to have access to the palace' The king complied with her request, and she enjoined everybody to bring to her any person, man or woman, who might be suffering from the same malady as the king.

Now it happened that a man of the shepherd caste was suffering from the same malady. His wife explained his case to a physician, who promised to prescribe a suitable remedy after examining the patient The man then consulted the physician, who brought him to Queen Tishyarakshitâ. She had him conveyed to a secret place, where he was put to death. When his body was opened she perceived in his stomach a huge worm, which had deranged the bodily functions She applied pounded pepper and ginger without effect, but when the worm was touched with an onion, he died immediately, and passed out of the intestines The queen then begged the king to eat an onion and so recover his health. The king replied 'Queen, I am a Kshatriya, how can I eat an onion?'

'My lord,' answered the queen, 'you should swallow it merely as physic in order to save your life.' The king then ate the onion, and the worm died, passing out of the intestines [1].

THE DOTAGE OF KING ASOKA

The king resolved to give a thousand millions of gold pieces to the Master's service, and when far advanced in years had actually given nine hundred and sixty millions. In the hope that the vow would be completed before he died he daily sent great treasures of silver and gold to the Kukkutârâma monastery at the capital. In those days Sampadî, the son of Kunâla [2], was heir-apparent. To him the ministers pointed out that the king was ruining himself by his extravagance, and would, if permitted to continue it, be unable to resist the attacks of other monarchs or to protect the kingdom.

The prince, therefore, forbade the treasurer to comply with the king's demands Asoka, unable to obtain

[1] Fa-hien (ch xvi) notes that the inhabitants of Gangetic India did not 'eat garlic or onions, with the exception of Chandâlas (outcastes) only.' The prejudice exists to this day The high-caste people perceive in onions a fanciful resemblance to flesh meat This story is from the Kunâla section of the *Divyâvadâna* in Burnouf, 'Introduction,' p 133.

[2] The Jain legends represent Sampadî as a great patron of the Jain church. Nothing authentic is known about him The legend of Asoka's dotage is given by Burnouf, pp. 381 *seqq* Compare the Ceylonese story of 'The Last Days of Asoka' in chapter vi, *ante*, p. 219.

supplies from the treasury, began to give away the plate which furnished the royal table, first the gold, next the silver, and finally the iron When all the metallic ware had been exhausted, the ministers furnished the king's table with earthenware Then Asoka demanded of them, 'Who is king of this country?' The ministers did obeisance and respectfully replied 'Your majesty is king' Asoka burst into tears, and cried 'Why do you say from kindness what is not true? I am fallen from my royal state. Save this half-apple[1] there is nought of which I can dispose as sovereign' Then the king sent the half-apple to the Kukkutârâma monastery, to be divided among the monks, who should be addressed in this wise 'Behold, this is my last gift, to this pass have come the riches of the emperor of India My royalty and my power have departed, deprived of health, of physic, and of physicians, to me no support is left save that of the Assembly of the saints Eat this fruit, which is offered with the intent that the whole Assembly may partake of it, my last gift'

Once more King Asoka asked his minister Râdhagupta 'Who is sovereign of this country?' The minister did obeisance and respectfully replied 'Sire, your majesty is sovereign of this country'

King Asoka, recovering his composure, responded in verse, and said —

This earth, encinctured by its sapphire zone,
This earth, bedecked with gleaming jewels rare,

[1] *Amalaka* fruit, *Emblica officinalis*

This earth, of hills the everlasting throne,
This earth, of all creation mother fair,
I give to the Assembly.

The blessing which attends such gift be mine;
Not Indra's halls nor Brahmâ's courts I crave,
Nor yet the splendours which round monarchs shine,
And pass away, like rushing Gangâ's wave,
Abiding not a moment

With faith unchangeable, which nought can shake,
This gift of Earth's immeasurable sphere
I to the Saints' Assembly freely make;
And self-control I crave, of boons most dear,
A good which changeth never[1]

King Asoka, having thus spoken, sealed the deed of gift, and presently fulfilled the law of mortality

The forty millions of gold pieces which yet remained to complete King Asoka's vow for the gift of a thousand

[1] According to Fa-hien (chapter xxvii), this gift of the empire was recorded in an inscription on a stone pillar to the south of Pâṭaliputra The site of the pillar has not been identified with certainty The speech of Asoka in prose is as follows —

'This earth, which ocean enwraps in a glorious garment of sapphire, this earth whereof the face is adorned with mines of diverse jewels, this earth, which supports all creatures and Mount Madara, I give to the Assembly

'As the reward of this good deed I desire not to dwell in the palace of Indra, nor yet in that of Brahmâ, nor do I in any wise desire the felicity of kingship, which, quicker even than running water, passes away and is gone.

'The reward which I crave for the perfect faith whereby I make this gift is that self-control which the saints honour, and which is a good exempt from change'

millions, were expended by the ministers in the redemption of the earth, and Sampadî was placed upon the vacant throne He was succeeded by his son Vrihaspati, who was succeeded in order by Vrishasena, Pushyadharma, and Pushpamitra

APPENDIX

By the kindness of Dr Bloch and of Major Alcock, I M S., Superintendent of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, I am able to give the following list of casts of the Asoka inscrip tions in the Indian Museum —

I The Fourteen Rock Edicts and Kalinga Edicts — Girnâr, Dhauli, Jaugada, Kâlsî, Shâhbâzgarhi, Mânsahra (except the fourth portion, containing Edict XIII)

II. Minor Rock Edicts —Sahasrâm and Siddapura (except version No III, from Jatinga-Râmesvara)

III Cave Inscriptions —The three Barâbar Hill records of Asoka and the three Nâgârjuni Hill records of Dasaratha

IV The Tarâi Pillars — Niglîva and Rummindei (Padariâ)

V. Pillar Edicts and Minor Pillar Edicts —Allahabad (including the Queen's and Kausâmbî Edicts), Lauriyâ-Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh (Navandgarh)

The original Bhâbrâ Inscription is preserved in the rooms of the Asiatic Society of Bengal

Casts of some of the inscriptions also exist in the Provincial Museum, Lucknow

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